

new

APRIL 9, 1935

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Masses

Heil Hearst!

By WILLIAM RANDORF

The Rape of Abyssinia

By BRUCE MINTON

Uncle Sam – Farm Mortgagor

By ROBERT HALL

Raining No More

By ROBERT FORSYTHE

THE
INTERNATIONAL WORKERS ORDER
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Workers Own Fraternal Benefit Society

Organized March 1930

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C O N C E R T A N D P A G E A N T

new Masses

APRIL 9, 1935

THE decision of the United States Supreme Court setting aside the verdict of guilty in the case of Haywood Patterson and Clarence Norris is a smashing victory not only for the International Labor Defense which has handled the Scottsboro case from the very beginning, it is one of the most important victories the Negro race has won since the Dred Scott decision in 1857. The conviction of the two Negro boys were invalidated by the Supreme Court on the grounds that there had been a systematic exclusion of Negroes from the jury in Alabama, an action that was a distinct violation of the Fourteenth Amendment which grants every citizen of this country "equal protection under the laws." With this decision on record the conviction of any Negro by a jury drawn from a panel which includes no names of Negroes is subject, without question, to appeal. As we go to press Patterson and Norris are being re-indicted by the vindictive authorities of Alabama, and the fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys, even with the Supreme Court victory, begins once again. The I. L. D. which has carried on the battle for all these years against not only the white chauvinism of the South but against the subversive tactics of certain liberal groups in the North, again must carry on the enormous expense and work of protecting the boys. The I. L. D. has again proven the value and importance of mass action. It would be criminal now to desert it in this hour of victory.

IF THERE is one thing that may be chalked up against Hitler's various diplomatic successes during the past years it must be his astonishing ability to alienate other governments. His conversation with Sir John Simon and Captain Eden in Berlin last week seemed to have given him every opportunity to display all his gifts in this particular direction. Britain, as represented by Eden and Sir John, arrived in Berlin with "open minds." They seemed eager to play ball with Hitler and probably would acquiesce to his anti-Soviet campaign if certain concessions were made in regard to Hitler's



air and naval program. According to the news and diplomatic gossip which has found its way into the daily press, Hitler, in the "conversations," brought all his arts of demagoguery into full play and talked to the two British representatives as if they were fifty million people gathered to listen to him. He demanded everything: superiority in arms, an Anschluss with Austria, a navy of 400,000 tons, an air fleet equal to that of England, and he refused to consider any pact which might prevent him from attacking Soviet Russia. At the end of the "exploratory" mission, an exploration which evidently led the two British diplomats right up to the headwaters of Hitler's delusions of imperialistic grandeur, our two British diplomats put on their hats and evidently decided that it would be best for them to stick by their old allies—at least for the time being.

THE generals in the Wilhelmstrasse must have thought twice concerning an immediate attack after Captain Eden's "exploratory" conversation with Stalin and Litvinov in Moscow. Under the influence of the great masses of English workers who desire peace and who also realize that Soviet Russia is the greatest force for peace in Europe at the present time, the conversation between Captain Eden and Stalin took on a much more realistic tone than that which took place in Berlin. After talking to Hitler the British evidently realized how dangerous any agreement with Germany would be, and even though the anti-Soviet feeling is still strong among a certain powerful class of pro-fascist leaders in England, there is a distinct realization of the danger any close relationship with Germany might mean. Hitler from the very beginning of his assumption of power has





talked and acted purely for domestic consumption and no agreement sanctioned by him could stand up against his desire for territorial expansion. The only possibility now open for England is to join France and Italy in creating an Eastern Locarno or Japan in an effort to dismember the Soviet Union.

THERE is, however, since the conversation in Moscow, less likelihood of a British-Japanese alliance. The greater possibility is that Germany and Japan, with the support of Hungary, Poland and Finland may make a concerted attack from the West and the East. The Ukraine with its rich natural resources could supply Hitler with all the raw materials he needs to carry on a war with the rest of Europe. Were it not for the fact that the relations between Japan and the U.S.S.R. have shown some improvement during the past few weeks, largely owing to the concessions which the Soviets granted in behalf of world peace, war would be much closer than it seems to be at the present moment. However, the danger of war has by no means disappeared. Japan, under the influence of her fascist statesmen, is ready to take advantage of any opportunity to extend her dominant role in the Far East. She will use the present unsettled situation in Europe to force Soviet Russia into even more important concessions than the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway and she is already suggesting that the Soviet Union sell her the rich oil lands on the island of Sakhalin. Within the next few weeks an alignment, at least temporary, between the great nations of Europe will become evident, but now that England seems to have withdrawn from Germany the chances for an attack on the Soviets from the East have been lessened.

EIGHT of the seventeen Sacramento workers, charged with Criminal Syndicalism, have been convicted on one count, "conspiracy to overthrow the government." This means that three young women and five young men, for the crime of helping agricultural workers fight against starvation, are condemned to San Quentin prison for from one to fourteen years. These eight have been the most active organizers of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union. Pat Chambers and Caroline Decker, among those convicted, participated in the great cotton strike in the San Joaquin Valley in

1933. The owners have been out to "get" these leaders. They created the Associate Farmers whose purpose it was to rid California of agricultural unions—most particularly joint unions of Mexican and native workers. The American Legion, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, the California Packing Company, and other large corporations joined the fight. The reactionary press with Hearst in the lead, spurred them on; sheriffs and the state highway patrol and vigilantes were mobilized. The red-scare provided the excuse for arrests. The eight will appeal; with sufficient mass pressure, the decision will be reversed. The Sacramento verdict must serve as a spur to workers in the fight against oppressive conditions, vigilante terror and legal lynching everywhere.

THE drug clerks, cigar clerks and fountain-men employed by the Silver Rod Drug Company in Greater New York are the latest victims of N.R.A. betrayal and are taking the line of mass struggle to defend their union rights. When the 350 workers employed in the forty drug stores of the Silver Rod Company began to join the Pharmacists' Union of Greater New York, Simon Rodnon, president of the company, called a meeting of his employes and told them he had no objections to their joining a union. He then outlined a scheme for the formation of a company union, the Independent Workers' Union. A number of men protested this move, and those who did were among sixteen fired shortly after by Rodnon. All were active organizationally. The Regional Labor Board ordered their reinstatement, holding their rights under Section 7a were patently violated. Rodnon defied the order. Now the clerks have called a strike to win the unionization rights which N.R.A. guarantees them only on paper. Drug clerks are picketing especially at stores in Brighton, Brownsville and the Bronx. Other workers are actively supporting the Pharmacists' Union. Another strike is on at the Progressive Drug Company, where forty-six workers were dismissed for organizational activities. There, too, the Regional Labor Board ordered their reinstatement, with, it is hardly necessary to state, the usual results.

THE instant and overwhelming indignation at the New York City administration's attempt to hang a red tag on the events at Harlem, March

19, has caused an immediate reaction: La Guardia and his District Attorney, Dodge, have been obliged to eat their words. Even their own police officials on the stand at the investigation, gulped and admitted that the "Red" leaflets originally alleged to have "started the riots" were not distributed until two hours after the demonstrations had begun. Most of these leaflets called for unified action between Negro and white workers to stem the agitation for race riots, that the Hearst press and the authorities attempted to provoke. Even Police Inspector John J. Marini put a crimp in the Red-baiting campaign when he admitted that the "outbreak had not been caused by any political group." The hearing by the Mayor's investigating committee, attended by 600 persons, broke into boos when Assistant District Attorney Alexander H. Kaminsky climbed on his high horse and refused to be questioned by "these irresponsible persons." He meant the lawyers representing the International Labor Defense. Arthur Garfield Hays, the liberal attorney, who presided at the session, said there was plenty of circumstantial evidence to support the general belief that a Negro child had been killed the night of March 19. He criticized the management of the Kress store for their refusal to give any exact information that day to the besieging masses. The Rev. A. Clayton Powell, Jr., assistant pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, placed the responsibility for the events on the authorities. "It was not a riot," he said, "it was an open, unorganized protest against the empty stomachs. . . ."

THE administration of Columbia University has never overlooked an opportunity to boast of its liberal reputation—and has constantly acted in the most reactionary manner. While the fascist Casa Italiana flourishes under the authorities' tolerant eyes, the Columbia Spectator, active in the fight against war and fascism, Hearst and reaction, proved a thorn in the side of the broad-minded administration. The result was tacit approval of the demand by the Student Board of Columbia—cooperating with the Nicholas Murray Butler clique—that editorials of The Spectator be approved by the entire managing board before publication. James Wechsler, editor, and his staff, protested by issuing a Spectator, blank except for a one-page editorial

attacking the ruling. The Student Board, in obvious compliance with the wishes of the administration, retaliated by suppressing the paper. For three days mass meetings of students and professors protested the ruling and supported Wechsler. The pressure proved too great. The Student Board backed down, agreed to submit the dispute to a student referendum in April. In the meantime, the paper will come out, and Wechsler, and his aides will follow the new ruling until the student body acts. But one vital point in student self-government has been clearly established—the right and necessity of the student body voting on any issue involving the fate of an independent student press, and the blocking of a minority from using repressive measures against freedom of speech and press in college.

WHILE more and more employers are turning to the courts as accessories in strike-breaking, it has been proved in numerous instances recently that the anti-labor injunction may turn out to be a boomerang. In the Ohrbach strike, workers threw hundreds of pickets on the line week after week, defying the injunction of Judge Collins. Mass arrests and threats of contempt of court only strengthened the determination of strikers, with the result

that the employers' side collapsed. The Newark Ledger strike was a still more significant example because the gag-injunction issued by Vice-Chancellor Berry was more far-reaching than any court action attempted against workers in recent years. The Ledger strikers, backed by the entire national body of the American Newspaper Guild, immediately defied the injunction, which proved ineffectual, and within two weeks the trustees of The Newark Ledger capitulated to as gritty a lot of white-collar strikers as the American labor movement has seen. THE NEW MASSES, as a unionized shop under the banner of the A.N.G., hails the Ledger fighters and their reinstatement. The first big strike of the newspapermen was hard fought, brilliantly led and completely successful. It will influence the history of American publishing.

AN AGREEMENT between imperialists today seems good only for the week-end. No sooner did Italy obtain approval of plans to invade the Negro State of Abyssinia than England reconsidered and grew perceptibly cool to the idea. For now England has discovered that attempts to violate the independence of Ethiopia might engender ill-feeling throughout Africa and stir up resentment against the "white man's

supremacy." England threatens to send troops into Somaliland. It is clear that the war-scare in Europe has motivated this change of front. Trouble in Abyssinia complicates the situation in Europe and is likely to antagonize Japan, which England is anxious to avoid. In the meantime, Germany has unofficially supported Emperor Haile Selassie by dispatching military experts to Ethiopia. And Abyssinia, caught between the conflicting ambitions of the imperialist powers, vainly appeals to the League of Nations which in turn side-steps the issue and urges further negotiations with Italy. Abyssinia remains the pawn to be shifted back and forth on the chess-board of international politics. When the powers come to divide the loot, they can never agree as to which should get the lion's share.

SOME owners of the "model" householders' development at Sunnyside, Long Island, are setting an example of militant struggle against extortionate carrying charges. These workers, artisans and professionals have been fighting their battle for two years, and in 1933 won an agreement to keep their homes on a basis of their ability to pay. They were deserted by their unstable leaders and have now declared a strike on their own account. The new movement started in January and today nearly five hundred well organized "mortgage strikers" are backing demands for: No foreclosures for two years; cancellation of all arrearages; cancellation of second mortgages and reduction of interest to 3 percent. The "model" homes have turned out to be flimsy in construction. Beams have given away, there are leaks in the roofs and walls, and sagging floors. The strikers point out that at the present dollar value of the homes, they are worth less than the first mortgages and will only rent for 3 percent of the first mortgages. A committee which visited Chairman Fahey of the Home Owners Loan Corporation in Washington, March 30, and the executives of the R. F. C. was "sent back" to Vincent Dailey, New York state manager of the H. O. L. C. But the group will not stop at interviewing government agencies. It has also refused to be stopped by the Red Scare. It will fight to the point of eviction, and this struggle will be watched by hundreds of thousands of small city owners in America, who are being similarly gouged and dispossessed.

new Masses

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Slow Starvation

OUT OF the mass of facts in the long report of the Mayor's Committee on Unemployment Relief emerges the story of suffering endured by millions in New York City through cheese-paring relief policies. The report is written in the cold, impersonal style of such documents, but it fails to hide the inferno between the lines. The purpose of the investigation was clearly to white-wash the relief administration wherever possible. Yet as the committee went on with its work it was forced to reveal most of the damaging facts. The whole trend of relief control has been to cut allotments, to save the big tax-payers and the city's banker-creditors. As we reported last week, average relief per family has been reduced more than 20 percent in three years. The committee declares that as a result, present relief cannot "maintain either health or a self-respecting community status for unemployed families." The food payments are too little to "keep a family healthy." One child in every five suffers from malnutrition. Relief costs, the report says, average \$12 a week for five in a family, or a little more than half the standard of private relief agencies.

There are two unemployed persons in the city today for every one who obtains relief. A catastrophic rise is taking place in white-collar applications. About half the new applications come from white-collar workers. The investigators and rank and file employes of the Relief Bureau are also subjected to abuses. Overcrowding and overload of cases are general. In one case 425 applicants were received in a schoolroom built to accommodate sixty-five children! In cold weather the air was foul, yet most of these people have to wait hours for attention. In the room next to this, twenty-three by thirty-one feet, forty people had to work. Investigators have as many as seventy cases, whereas the load carried by those in private agencies is about thirty-one. In the personnel, "The sense of insecurity . . . is caused by the temporary aspect of the work, low wages and the absence of any protective organization." (The report seems to ignore the militant Emergency Home Relief Employes' Association). There is a belief among employes that "or-

ganizational activity will be punished by dismissal or transfer," continues the report and admits that employes are subjected to "special surveillance," and their leaders transferred and dismissed for organizing. The cases of Riback and Sidonia Dawson are notorious. Of the staff of 10,000, more than 1,000 were transferred and dismissed in 1934. The salaries of those dismissed went to swell the pay of those in the upper brackets, as Commissioner Hodson has admitted.

Workers, however, can place little dependence on any action that will

follow this report sponsored by the banker-controlled La Guardia ring. The Unemployment Councils point out that relief is in direct proportion to organization and struggle. The six-point program of the Unemployment Council includes: an immediate relief increase of 25 percent; full cash payment of rent and household bills; work relief at socially useful projects in workers' neighborhoods, at trade union wages; jobs for all unemployed able to work; no relief discrimination against unemployables; removal of police from relief stations, and the passage of H. R. 2827. This is the program that white-collar workers on relief must support if they wish to protect themselves from slow starvation.

The Campus Strikes!

AS THE date for the general strike of students draws nearer it becomes increasingly evident that the authorities of the schools and colleges are beginning to realize the real significance of the movement. At the University of California eighteen students were recently arrested for circulating strike leaflets; the university officials refused to protest and encouraged the city to prosecute. Dr. Eugene Colligan, president of Hunter College in New York City, a Tammany appointee, suspended a freshman leader of the National Students' League for her anti-war activities. And in several high schools, particularly in New York City and Detroit, the principals, in their efforts to break the strike, have announced that class examinations are to be held on April 12 when the students are expected to make their mass protest against war.

Under the pressure of the student movement the authorities in some institutions have also displayed a desire to take part in the strike. At the College of the City of New York, the administration, which within the past year and a half has expelled forty-two students for demonstrating against war and fascism, announced that it will favor an anti-war meeting "some time during the day" of April 12. Moreover the University of California, notorious for its suppression of any action on the part of the students that might offend Hoover or William Randolph Hearst, is also willing to sponsor

a meeting. At De Pau University the administration has urged that the students hold their strike on April 2, rather than on April 12 in an evident attempt to rob the strike of some of its force as a nation-wide movement.

But for all the antagonism of the college authorities, the movement for a strike at eleven on the morning of April 12 is daily invading new territory. Though last year's strike was an impressive example of student unity in a protest against war, it was restricted to college and university students, while this year the strike has penetrated the high schools of every large city and of many towns. Moreover, the Southern students, who scarcely have been involved before, are taking a part this year in the movement against war. The strike has obtained enthusiastic support from various student organizations at the Universities of Virginia and North Carolina, while at Virginia, Union and Howard Universities, Negro institutions, it has the general support of the student body. At Howard, the R.O.T.C. band itself has consented to lead the anti-war parade.

Preparations for the big strike on April 12 already involves tens of thousands of students throughout the country. The plans for the strike have cemented the unity of action among liberals, Christian pacifists, Communists, socialists and members of all other organizations that see in war and fascism a threat not only of their careers but a threat to civilization itself.

Inflation—What It Is

IN RECENT weeks several events have taken place in this country and abroad which again remind us of the dogged efforts on the part of world capitalism to use the power of inflation as one means of "solving" the crisis. We commented last week on the attempts to stimulate inflation in this country by the proposal to pay the soldiers' bonus of two billion dollars with greenbacks, and by the proposal to extend the remonetization of silver by another billion dollars. At about the same time that these inflationary proposals were being brought forth in the halls of the American Congress, Belgium was reported to have gone off the gold standard, as we showed some time ago she was bound to do under the accumulated pressure of the crisis within her borders. That little country reached a new low in industrial production in 1934, at a time when most other capitalist countries had experienced a modicum of recovery from the depths of the crisis. Her foreign trade in 1934, in gold prices, was over 6 percent less than in 1933, and 59 percent below 1929. In spite of repeated wage cuts imposed upon her workers, she was unable successfully to compete against the devaluated currencies of her trade rivals. She lost particularly against Japan in the matter of her exports of textiles. Now Belgium is off the gold standard and, in addition, has devaluated her domestic currency 28 percent. This, be it recorded, is Belgium's second devaluation in exactly ten years—in 1926 by 85 percent.

All this is inflation. And yet the average citizen who has been talked inflation deaf, dumb and blind these past few years may well shrug his shoulders and say, "But is not that just talk, theory?" Inflation to the average citizen's mind formulates itself in the shape of a wild scramble for commodities, in a runaway market. He thinks of bushels of paper bills; he thinks of "shin plasters," and "continentals," and "greenbacks." Worthless money, becoming worth still less while you attempt to convert it into something tangible,—into food, clothes, things. Today he sees no such evidence of inflation. Yet everybody talks of inflation.

Now what is this thing inflation that is and is not inflation? The answer to

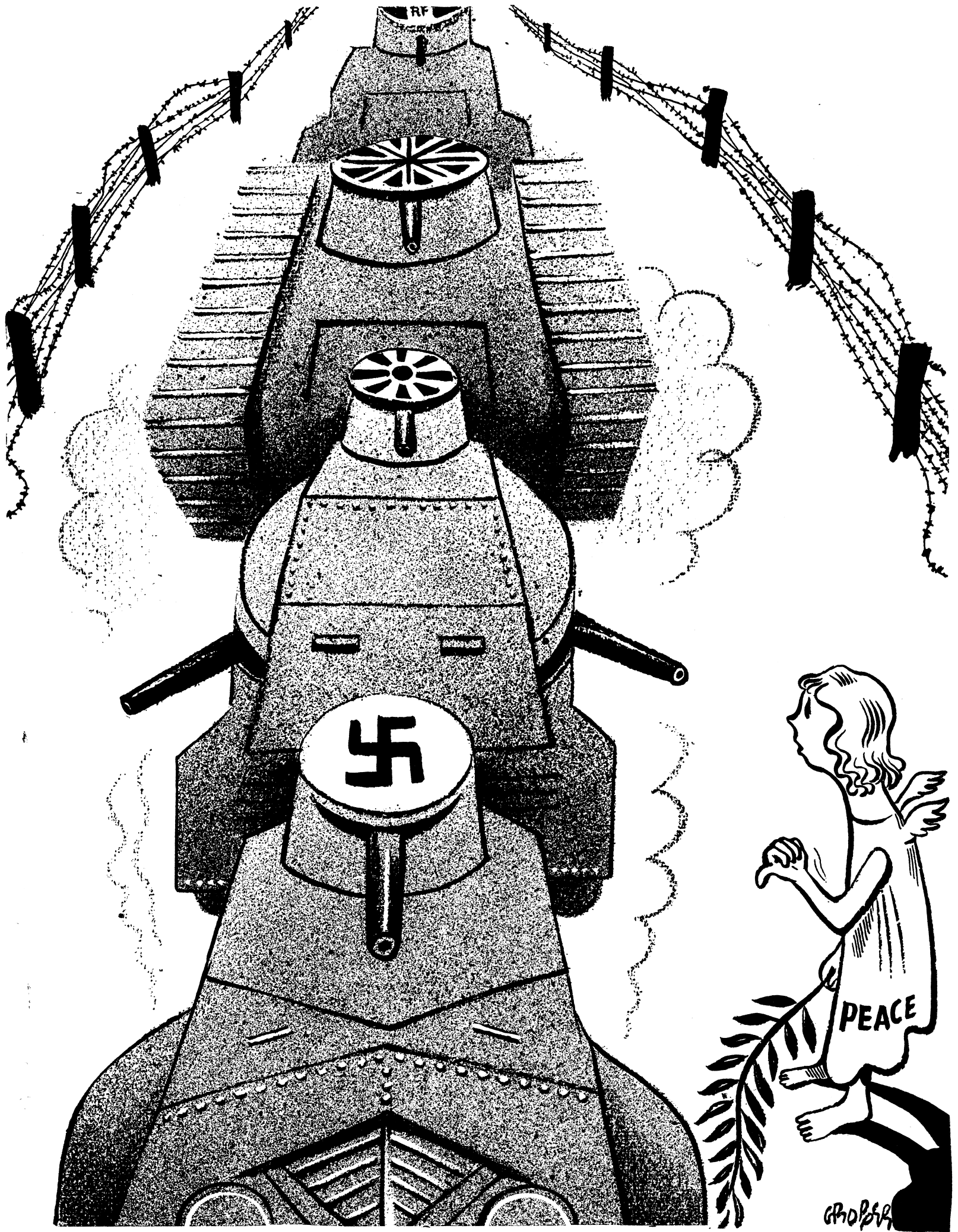
this question is that one must make a distinction between the act and the fact of inflation. The act of inflation is the manipulation of the currency so as to bring about an increase in the market price of commodities beyond the levels that are justified by normal demand. The common idea of inflation is that by means of cheapening the coin of the realm, increased prices are stimulated arbitrarily and rapidly. The first part of this—the cheapening of currency—is what we call the act of inflation. The second result—the rise in prices—occurs only when the inflationary acts become effective. Prices often rise rapidly and quite high in normal times, as a result of an increase in demand relative to the ability of industry to increase the supply. But in "normal" times the rise in price *follows* the increase in the demand. Inflationary price rises *precede* the increase in demand. Indeed, this is the purpose of inflation: through an artificial rise in prices to stimulate demand, and thus stimulate trade and industry. When this latter eventuality does not take place, we have not yet inflation. We have only the means of inflation. When cheap money and expanded credit and currency fail to raise prices, we have the act and not the fact of inflation.

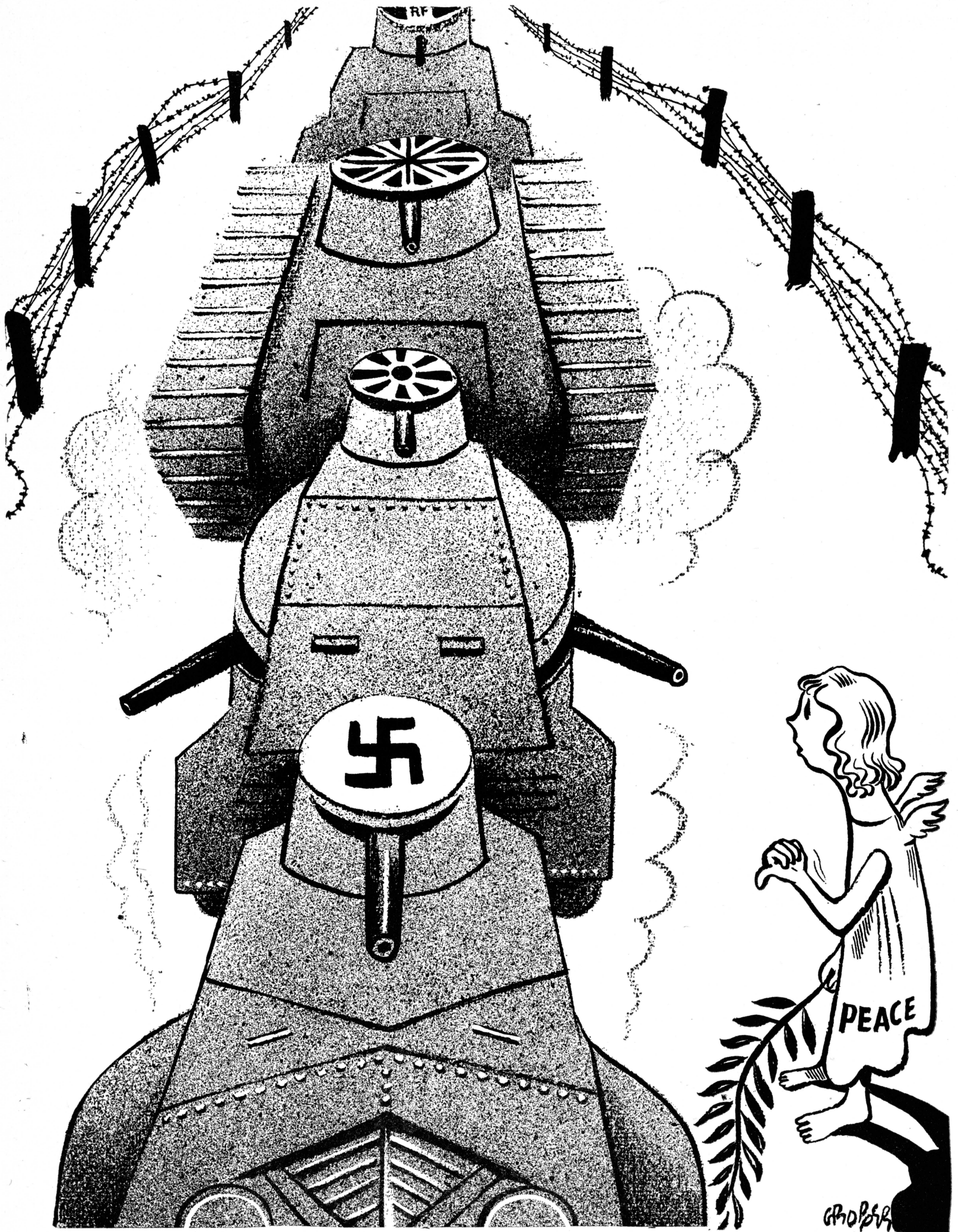
This has been the experience of America since Mr. Roosevelt has set out "to raise prices to the level of 1926." We have now all the pertinent implements to bring about inflation. Yet we have no inflation. The New York Federal Reserve Board, in its annual report for 1934, shows that the banks of the country now have it in their power to issue twice the amount of credit outstanding. Money rates are now the lowest on record. The dollar is officially worth only 59 percent of what it was but a little over a year ago. Yet general prices have risen hardly at all, with the exception of the rise of some 35 percent in foods and food products. And, as every one knows, this price increase was due mainly to the imposition of the processing tax and to the threat of scarcity because of the drought, and probably but little to the depreciation of the currency. Indeed, so little bearing does our state of the currency seem to have on prices, that every renewed suspicion that inflation will not go to further

lengths induces a relapse in the price structure in the commodities as well as in the securities' markets. Why is it, then, that in spite of these steps toward inflation, we have no inflation?

The reason, we believe, lies in the deep-seated severity of the American crisis, in the very nature of the crisis which compels inflation, and which yet cannot respond to the inflationary measures as thus far resorted to. It lies in the fact that inflation of the currency, to become effective, must go so far as to induce "a flight from money." Money must become so cheap, or threaten to become so cheap that the people rush to the market to dispose of it, to exchange it for commodities and other things. By this very process they lower the value of money still further, or what amounts to the same thing, progressively push prices upward.

But assuming a loss of confidence in the soundness of the national currency, one must also assume that the masses of the people have in their possession national currency from which they would flee. But this has been true only of a small portion of our population, the richer farmers who benefitted from the government bounties, and the rentier class. Interest payments on bonds and mortgages have been paid right along, undiminished, through the five years of crisis and depression. These sections of the population have "fled from the currency" to a considerable extent. They have not bought potatoes and cabbages. But they have bought automobiles. The increase in automobile sales in 1934 was greatest in these agricultural areas. In 1934, passenger-car registration increased by nearly a million. The unemployed did not buy the over 2,000,000 new cars that were added to the registration lists in 1934. This increase in car registration, the first since 1930, occurred precisely when threats of inflation put the shivers into the *rentier* class. For those who have, there was possible a "flight from money." They bought automobiles. The masses cannot rush to the market to convert their money into commodities; they cannot engage in a "flight from the currency." They have no currency. Therefore, the general price level has remained immune to the inflationary measures thus far brought forth. Therefore new and more drastic inflationary measures would seem to be in store. It is the only means of "stimulating" mass demand when the masses have no real purchasing power.





HEIL HEARST

WILLIAM RANDORF

The editor with his heart in Wall Street ceases to be yellow. He takes on a superior golden hue. —ARTHUR BRISBANE.

SINCE fascism could not be imposed on the United States without demagoguery, it is only natural that the forces of reaction here are led by William Randolph Hearst. For Hearst, even with today's keen competition from the Huey Longs and Father Coughlins, remains the outstanding demagogue of America.

Hearst started with millions in cash and property inherited from his father, George Hearst, lucky prospector and one-time United States senator. He developed into an industrial baron, lording it over an immense industrial empire closely aligned with Wall Street's leading figures. While still young, he lifted an idea in yellow journalism from Joseph Pulitzer, its first exponent, bought brains to carry out and develop the pilfered policies, and expanded into the country's biggest publisher. Hearst publications are read by 30,000,000 people—one out of every four in the United States.

In industry, Hearst extended his already enormous domain by war-mongering, political treachery, strike-breaking and labor exploitation. In the publishing business, Hearst attained his success by playing upon prejudices and passions, by faked and distorted news, by commercializing patriotism, by exploitation of sex and crime and wealth in his columns.

To Lincoln Steffens he once confided that his mastering ambition was to become President of the United States. With economic and social conditions changed so as more and more to divide society into two camps—fascist and Communist—Hearst now sees the possibility of becoming the Hitler or the Mussolini (he extravagantly and publicly admires both) of America. In his mines and his other industrial enterprises, in his publishing business and at home, he is at all times dress-rehearsing for the role of a fascist dictator.

Hearst lives on his 240,000 acre estate at San Simeon, California, like a king. For his imperial palace there he has imported fantastic objects of luxury from the six continents: antiques, ceilings, wells, tapestries, silks, fireplaces, stained glass windows, sculptures, paintings, art objects and even an entire castle. A private train brings Hearst and his guests to this "ranch." The property runs for fifty miles along the Pacific Ocean. The man who was later to run a noisy campaign to "Buy American" named the group of buildings erected at an altitude of 2,000 feet and housing his foreign-bought

treasures, "La Cuesta Encantada"—the Enchanted Hill.

A private zoo on the estate contains lions, elephants, giraffes, monkeys, rare birds. Choice cattle are kept on the dairy farm. In the stables are costly Arabian breeding horses. In the Hearst mansion a private telephone switchboard, special wireless and telegraph stations are maintained, through which reports are received and orders go out from "The Chief." When the houses were first being built, Hearst ordered the topmost group of apartments which he was to occupy named the "Imperial Suite." Later, he had another story built on in order to christen it the "Celestial Suite."

Extension 'phones connected with the switchboard are placed on trees, booths and outhouses both near and far from the main building, for use of guests and host.

Hearst entertains lavishly and on a grand scale, reminiscent of old royal customs. Guests may entertain themselves, riding, swimming in the pool, playing tennis, hunting—there are hunting preserves—provided only they conform to certain rules Hearst has established. For instance, no one must ever mention death in his presence. No one may drink wine or liquor in the rooms assigned him. But the most sacred rite of all comes in the evening in the great dining hall, seating 150, bursting with the relics of crumbled sixteenth-century European monarchies. The housekeeper informs guests each day when the King will dine. All must be present at that time. Within a half hour, perhaps an hour, William Randolph Hearst, with the theatrical calculation of a prima donna, makes his entrance, and the meal proceeds.

Usually, after dinner, the guests attend the private screen performance given in Hearst's own cinema temple. Guests may sit where they please—except on the throne-like divan in front, which is reserved for Hearst and, on occasion, one favorite he selects to share the seat of honor.

Throughout the huge estate, lie unpacked crates. There is no immediate room for these lately-bought treasures. Indeed, immense as his "ranch" is, Hearst has acquired so many possessions that to store them he purchased a warehouse in New York, a block long. In it is stored the overflow of antiques. The gigantic warehouse not long ago became so crowded that Hearst ordered an extension built to it!

In his industrial and publishing empire, Hearst exchanges the role of kingly host for that of the capitalist autocrat. He rules as a despot—irresponsible, capricious, wilful. It seems to satisfy his dictatorial nature to fire

workers wholesale from his properties—and to do it frequently. When "the axe swings," as the newspaper jargon has it, even executives tremble. Like any ruler by divine right of old, Hearst, to indulge a whim, will heap fabulous rewards upon some executive who has done his bidding well; he will punish by firing or demotion those who displease him, or simply to "make an example" of them. If you are a low-paid worker for Hearst, you don't have to incur his ire to be fired. For the sake of "discipline," to inculcate fear in the hearts of his staffs, he orders periodic shake-ups and lay-offs on all his newspapers. At one time the slogan of Hearst newspapermen used to be: "My soul belongs to Mr. Hearst, but thank God, my body is my own." If there is a strike in one of his properties, Hearst will seek to break it with all the terroristic tactics of any capitalist fighting workers.

Hearst was born in San Francisco in 1863. He grew up in that era when Harriman, Gould, Rockefeller—the financial titans of the Robber Baron Age—were creating American monopolies. He was expelled from the fashionable St. Paul's School at Concord, N. H., for being an evil influence on his school-mates. Harvard ousted him before he could graduate because of his rowdiness, which he called practical jokes. A final "prank" led to his expulsion. One morning he had a package sent by messenger to every staid member of the faculty. Each professor on unwrapping the parcel found himself gazing at a chamber-pot decorated with his own likeness. Commenting upon this, Ferdinand Lundberg, writing in *Social Frontier*, said "The moral is that William Randolph Hearst still hands out chamber-pots wrapped up in paper. It is a practical joke on the public, and quite without moral illusion."

After his expulsion, Hearst took over *The San Francisco Examiner*. He made it sensational. His slogan then, as now, was "Boost circulation. Make the paper pay." Here he made the first big sell-out of his career. He attacked the Southern Pacific Railroad for its high fares. He gained circulation by claiming to serve the interests of the people. Suddenly the attacks ceased. It became known later that Hearst had made a contract with the road for \$1,000 worth of advertising in his paper for twenty-two months on condition that "the company is not to be made the victim of mendacious attacks!" The contract was at one time made public.

The paper became successful. In 1895 Hearst came to New York and bought *The Morning Journal*, which he later turned into

an evening paper. There followed the famous "duel of dollars" with Pulitzer, in which Hearst, through his superior methods of "making" stories when they didn't exist, and luring men to his paper by offering more money, outstripped the aging Pulitzer of *The World*.

In New York, Hearst's desire for political power crystallized. This was immediately after he conducted the campaign against the Hay-Pauncefote treaty ratification—the agreement with England giving the United States permission to build and control the Panama Canal—unless it were strongly fortified. Hearst won his militarist fight, swaying a Congress which had wanted to approve the pact as it stood.

Through a deal with Tammany, Hearst was twice elected to Congress. But despite his gigantic wealth and his growing power as a publisher, he was defeated when he ran for Mayor of New York City, for Governor of New York State, and when he sought the Democratic nomination for President in 1904.

At the Democratic convention which nominated Hearst for Governor, State Senator Thomas F. Grady, at the bidding of Charles F. Murphy, boss of New York, packed the meeting. After it was over, he told friends: "Boys, I've just done the dirtiest day's work of my life."

Hearst organized his own party—to no avail. He was the self-styled servant of the people—but he couldn't be elected. He attacked the "criminal rich" and came out for "the oppressed workers" and against "the trusts"—but he still obtained no elective office. Losing the battle for Mayor, he assailed Murphy as a crook. The next year, running for Governor, he accepted Murphy's support! For a score of years, he was al-

ternately to denounce and praise Murphy, as his political interests dictated.

About this time a large anthracite miners' strike broke out in Pennsylvania. New York was without coal. Hearst had special trains bring in coal. Then he ordered a number of his newspapermen to man wagons loaded with this coal, and sell it in the streets of New York.

Hearst attacked trusts and corporations in his papers when it seemed "good business" to do so. At the same time, he maintained close and friendly contact with those heads of trusts and corporations with whom he was linked socially and economically. With Elbert H. Gary, of the United States Steel Corporation, he was always on the best of terms. Gary's words, no matter how banal, how unsound, were always "must" copy for his papers. As for Andrew Mellon, Hearst led a presidential boom for him.

Sometimes Hearst papers will come out against "munition interests." But Mr. Irénée Du Pont is given large space on the feature pages to expound his views of patriotism—i.e., national defense.

In 1929, Hearst hired W. B. Shearer, seller of "patriotism" and wrecker, as paid agent of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company and other ship interests as well as steel barons of the Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1928, "to organize the patriotic societies of the United States against the World Court." At \$500 a week, Shearer proceeded to his work so well that the Senate soon received a flood of letters from these societies urging opposition to the Court. Shearer's Scotland Yard dossier asserts him to be an associate of international crooks. He was fired only when the congressional investigation into his Geneva activities opened.

which holds shares in these as well as other corporations.

Through his copper affiliations, Hearst is closely connected also with the Kuhn-Loeb-Morgan crowd. John L. Spivak in a recent *NEW MASSES* article, showed that about the time Hearst opened his anti-Red campaign last year, a Hitler commission was about to arrange for millions of dollars of credit for copper and other war material to be purchased by Germany, and that the Hearst copper was among items considered.

Hearst himself has interests in the Marine-Midland Trust Company which is under Morgan and Du Pont domination. Through close connection with A. P. Giannini, California banker, Hearst is influential in the enterprises controlled by Giannini: the Bank of America, Transamerica corporation, General Foods and Bancamerica-Blair.

Giannini is on the board of the National City Bank. The National City Bank is the chief Hearst depository. It has floated a number of Hearst security issues. At the present time, it has outstanding \$70,000,000 in loans to the Anaconda Copper Mining Company, largely dominated by Hearst.

In 1925, S. W. Straus and Co., the firm which later failed, accused of fraud, made a public offering of \$7,000,000 first mortgage bonds on New York real estate—five large midtown buildings—known as the "Hearst-Brisbane properties."

Through property he owns, or through business interests of the firms in the profits of which he shares, Hearst has stakes in Mexico, the Philippines, Cuba, Africa, South America, Europe—almost every country in the world.

It is little wonder that with such colossal holdings Hearst and his newspapers are defending the interests of the social status quo—the maintenance of the privileges and fortunes of the robber barons and plunder potentates, for Hearst and his class. With all Hearst's chicanery, deceitfulness and lying, he has been consistent only in his allegiance to his own class. And never more so than today, when he sees that the social system of exploitation which nurtured him is rendered daily more insecure by growing poverty, increasing oppression of workers, accumulating causes for recurrent economic crises and an increasing distrust among workers of a "democracy" which doesn't cover them. The fear which, through the years, Hearst tried to instill in his workers, to keep them submissive, is laying a cold hand on his own heart.

Hearst today is the spearhead of the organized drive by big business and finance capital to prop up a tottering capitalist economy by setting up fascism in the United States. At a recent secret meeting in New York of the National Manufacturers' Association heads, Hearst was appointed as chief of a propaganda committee to smash the Communist Party and all labor organizations fighting for economic betterment and their denied civil rights. This was but one phase

The Hearst Industrial Empire

Some conception of the far-flung financial and industrial interests of Hearst is afforded by the following incomplete list:

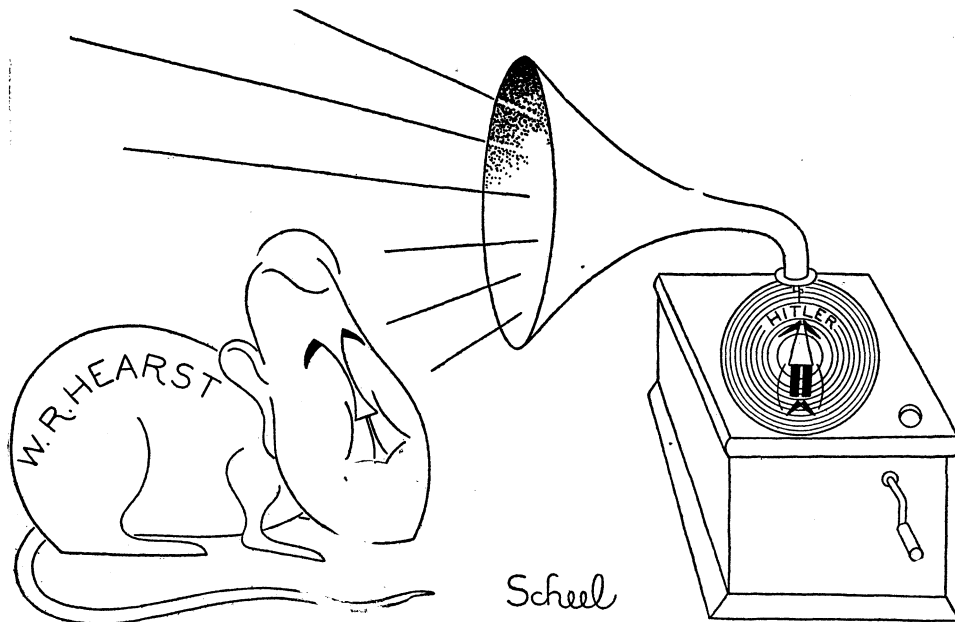
Hearst inherited huge blocks of shares in the San Luis mine, San Dimas, Mexico; the Ophir mine, Nevada; Ontario mine, Utah; the Anaconda mine, Montana; the Homestake mine, South Dakota. He acquired control of the Cerro de Pasco Copper Company of Peru. He owns twenty-eight newspapers in eighteen cities of the United States. He owns a dozen or so magazines—some in England—two news services, feature syndicates, motion picture newsreels, a photograph service, radio stations. His publications during the boom years of the nineteen-twenties were estimated to gross an annual revenue of \$150,000,000, a net profit of perhaps \$15,000,000 a year.

Hearst's San Simeon estate in California is assessed at a mere \$1,333,000. In Chihuahua, Mexico, he owns the Babicora Ranch. According to John K. Winkler, who wrote a biography of Hearst a few years ago, "the

distance from [Hearst's] front door to his front gate is 73 miles; from his back porch to his rear fence, 60 miles." As at San Simeon, Hearst has crowded his ranch with treasures and antiques from all over the world, valued at tens of millions of dollars. In New York and elsewhere, Hearst is a large owner of real estate. He has vast agricultural holdings, a chicken ranch, a dairy farm.

His right-hand man, Edward H. Clark, is president of the Homestake Mining Company, and the Cerro de Pasco mine company. The financial tie-ups of Hearst are well illustrated by the directorships Clark holds.

These include: the Irving Trust Company; The National Surety Company; The American Metal Company; the American Trust Company; the Pacific Title and Trust Company; the Santa Eulalia Mining Company; the Seaboard Oil Company (linked to the Royal Dutch Shell Company). Clark is also administrator of the Hearst estate,



of the campaign the fascist plotters have initiated. Another is the vicious, fabricated anti-Soviet Union and Red-baiting campaign in the Hearst chain of newspapers. Hearst's constant services and devotion to the interests of his own class, his usefulness to entrenched wealth by hypocritical diversion of workers from their real welfare amply earned him this leadership, in their view.

There is another reason: Since the advent of Franklin D. Roosevelt on the national political scene, Hearst has emerged as a maker of Presidents and the "invisible government" behind the present Democratic administration in Washington. It is the first time Hearst has occupied this position, although even some years back James W. Gerard published a list of the "fifty-nine rulers of America" (you will recall the President wasn't mentioned in it) who he said dominated every national administration, and listed Hearst among the fifty-nine. Hearst has since forged ahead, until now he is virtually a dictator among the dictators.

Hearst became a President-maker at the Democratic Convention which nominated Roosevelt. He controlled the votes of the Texas and California delegations without which Roosevelt could not have won. Hearst bartered the votes for the naming of John N. Garner as Vice-President. It was a moment of supreme triumph for the publisher and industrialist who owed his power to wealth and demagoguery. He may well have felt that next to being President, dominating a President has its rewards.

The Roosevelt policies have given unmistakable evidence how the man responsible for his nomination and the election has been repaid. They also show that Hearst is definitely linked up with the fascist policies of Father Coughlin, who by the way, in 1932 spent half his vacation as Hearst's house guest at San Simeon.

At the urging of Hearst, Coughlin and the Committee for the Nation, Roosevelt adopted new monetary policies. What the

gold and silver actions meant to Hearst is illustrated by what happened to the stock of Homestake Mining Company, which he owns. Before Roosevelt's reign, the shares sold at about \$100 each. Now they are bought and sold at about \$365, having been at near \$400 a few weeks ago. Incidentally, how that mining property, probably the largest gold mine in the world, exposed the Hearst strike-breaking role, at its rawest, will be told a little later in this article.

There are other evidences of Roosevelt's "appreciation" of Hearst: For instance, the President appointed George Buckley, an officer of the National City Bank and former Hearst executive, as a member of the Newspaper Code Authority. In clashes with his

Hearst the War Maker

He frequently has attempted to incite a similar war of conquest against Mexico, where he and his allies have large interests that demand "protection" to enable more efficient exploitation of that country. Japan, which is penetrating the China and South American trade fields to the detriment of Hearst and other American capitalists, is his traditional enemy, war with whom he is continually seeking to inspire.

Joseph Pulitzer, editor of *The World*, whose ideas of yellow journalism Hearst purloined to found his own chain of newspapers, once said: "I wouldn't mind a war—not a big one, just one to excite the people and let me gauge its reflex on our circulation."

Hearst whole-heartedly echoes his sentiments. Although he has been the most strident in demanding a huge navy and a huge airplane fleet for America, Hearst is afraid of another world war, just as he was afraid of the last one. His opposition to that was not so much based on some lingering ancient Irish hatred of England, not on any whim, but on a deep-rooted anxiety—which the setting up of the Soviet Union and the revolu-

employees—and there have been many lately—Hearst conceivably might find this an advantage.

The National City Bank (perhaps you remember its former president, Charles E. Mitchell, was ousted after a Senate inquiry brought forth so much corruption he had to be sacrificed to stop possible further unsavory disclosures) has Clark as one of its directors. Clark is administrator of the Hearst estate. The bank is also the Hearst depository and has made loans to his enterprises. It "happens to be" dominant economically in Cuba—the same Cuba which Hearst made it possible for an incipient American imperialism to acquire.

Even in his war-mongering—and Hearst is a super-Jingo—he is ruled by his fears that too big a war might be followed by revolutions which would topple the monopolists and captains of commerce and industry and finance into oblivion. It is well known by now that the Spanish-American War was a "one-man-war"—and Hearst is the man who made it. It was not merely circulation he sought in this military exploit. American frontiers had been reached by capitalism. Expansion had to be sought outside of the immense reaches of the United States. Imperialism was the next step. Under cover of the war hysteria over "oppressed" Cuba, Hearst aided in launching the United States on imperialism. It was just the sort of war Hearst likes, and by raping Cuba—rich in sugar and other products, a fertile field in which to exploit a whole people's labor for profit—he advanced his own interests and those of his class. And trade with the Philippines proved not the least of the benefits to Hearst.

tionary outbreaks throughout Europe fully justified—that he and his class might perish in the aftermath.

How much he is still ruled by this dread is shown in an exchange of letters he had last year with Alfred Rosenberg, chief of Hitler's foreign propaganda section. In one of these, Hearst wrote:

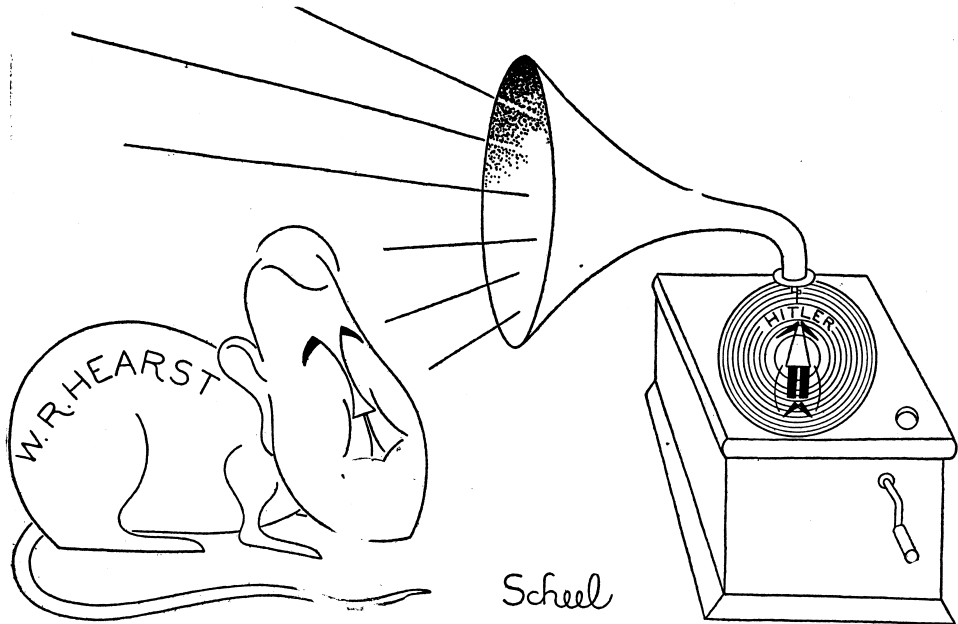
The next war will be more destructive, the subsequent disaster greater, the resentment of the people more intense. Governments will be overthrown, upper classes leveled in the dust.

It is this he fears. He considers the present social order as divinely established for the benefit of himself and his class which workers must not dare disturb. Only last November, he wrote:

Fascism is definitely a movement to oppose and offset Communism and so prevent the least capable and the least creditable classes from getting control of the government. . . . The proletariat is the body of citizenship least able to manage the nation's affairs. This class should be the care and concern of the government, but the government should not be the peculiar concern of this class.

So Hearst seeks to stop a workers' govern-

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ment by fighting Communism and unionism generally.

That is why he is a fascist. As a matter of fact, his own career has been a microcosm of fascism. Just as a capitalist government resorts to the terror and violence of fascism to maintain itself in power when collapse is approaching, so Hearst used these weapons to maintain himself as the towering capitalist he is.

His strike-breaking record alone is a good illustration of this. When the miners tried to organize at his Homestake Mining Company, located in the Black Hills at Lead City, South Dakota—the town had a population of 10,000 then—Hearst locked them out.

Armed thugs were imported to guard strike-breakers. Those locked-out miners who refused to tear up their union cards were driven out. The company later issued an official public "warning" to other business houses in the neighborhood. It read:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

In view of the fact that the mining industry in the Black Hills district is the source from which all the other business interests in the said district derive their main support and that said industry intends to establish permanently in said district what are commonly known as non-union conditions, it is respectfully suggested to all such other business interests that their actions should be vigorously in support of the aforesaid expressed intention.

Hearst crushed the unions. A spy system was started to intimidate the workers, and to report on every one who visited the town. Harper's Weekly, in reporting the situation, stated: "No human being in Lead has any civil, religious, industrial or political rights except by consent of the Hearst interests."

Homestake Mining shares in 1934 paid an extra dividend of \$18 a share.

More recently, Hearst has given full evidence of his continuing anti-union stand. He and Giannini, controlling California politics and policies, are the inciters and leaders of the intense attack on the workers of Imperial Valley who are heroically organizing and fighting to lift themselves out of the prevailing slave conditions there. Workers on Good Housekeeping and Cosmopolitan magazines—Hearst-owned—went on strike last August because of discriminations when unionization was attempted.

At the time of the San Francisco general strike, Hearst was in London. By long distance telephone, he instructed his agents and other publishers how to break the strike. Hearst papers led the move by printing hysteria-producing lies. J. F. Neylan, Hearst counsel, was made chairman of a publishers' council set up to assume direction of smashing the strike, as Hearst directed. It was this group, under Neylan's guidance, which instructed Gen. Hugh Johnson, then head of the N.R.A., how to act most effectively in the role of strike-breaker. By wire from Hearst in London came the story of how the British government used terrorism and bru-

tality to break its general strike in 1926. Hearst ordered it printed in his papers.

Only a little while ago, Hearst forced Roosevelt openly to side with the publishers as against newspaper employes, despite a personal feud which Roosevelt had had with the publishers and his promises of the right of collective bargaining to newspaper workers. Hearst fired, among many others, Dean Jennings, star rewrite man of The San Francisco Call-Bulletin. This was part of the bitter fight Hearst headed on behalf of himself and other publishers against the American Newspaper Guild. The National Labor Relations Board, after an investigation, ordered Jennings reinstated, since he was obviously punished purely for acting under Section 7a, ostensibly enacted to permit workers to organize and bargain collectively. Donald Richberg, "Assistant President," heard Hearst's protests. He ordered the Board to reconsider. It did so and upheld its original decision. The American Newspaper Publishers' Association fumed and threatened. Hearst editorials thundered against the Guild. Then Roosevelt definitely sided with his friend and sponsor, anti-labor Hearst. He ruled the Board had no jurisdiction, that all such cases as that of Jennings must be referred to the code labor authorities—manned by an employers' group!

Hearst, however, is far from free of labor troubles. In Peru, his outrageously underpaid workers in his copper mine are in a ferment and ready to revolt, threatening Hearst profits. Farmers and workers in South Dakota have started a movement for the confiscation of Hearst's Homestake Mining Company because, through political chicanery, he has managed to escape the bulk of the state taxes such a property would normally yield. Relief in South Dakota is inadequate.

Brutality often accompanies the Hearst strike-breaking tactics. This was the case in Boston some years ago, when his newsboys went on strike. In Boston, also, Hearst ruthlessly suppressed the attempt of newspaper workers to organize. He imported strike-breakers from Chicago and San Francisco,

firing every man who was known to be for the union. One of the fired workers was so despondent at the loss of his job and failure to find another that he committed suicide. Hearst is using similar tactics in other cities today, and not only strike-breaking but outright thuggery. He has strong-arm men and private detectives steal photographs, letters, documents, tap telephone wires, obtain evidence against those who have incurred his enmity, scare people who are suing him for libel.

Incidentally, libel suits filed against Hearst's New York papers—The Evening Journal and The American—reach fabulous totals. At one time, suits aggregating \$2,400,000 were pending against the two papers in the New York Supreme Court. Simultaneously, suits listed in the Brooklyn courts brought the total to \$7,500,000.

In passing, another suit against Hearst should be mentioned. The Associated Press brought suit against Hearst's International News Service during the world war. Hearst had been stealing news from the A. P. by bribing an employe to "tip him off" to anything important the A. P. carried. Often the Hearst service could thus clear the news before the rival service. A trap was set for I. N. S. The A. P. notified its clients, but not the suspected employe, of it. Thus it came about that I. N. S. carried a story one day that the British cruiser Nelots was sunk. There was no such cruiser. The name, read backwards, won the suit for the A. P.

Underworld connections are sought and used by Hearst to his advantage. Those who were with him at the time he established his first Chicago newspaper, early in the century, credit Hearst with starting the rackets that were to flourish into "big business" in Chicago twenty years later, with their gangster killings and forcibly collected "tribute."

Dion O'Bannion, the gangster killed in the St. Valentine's massacre in Chicago for opposing the Al Capone overlordship in the bootleg domain, was at one time on the Hearst payroll. He was paid for slugging in the circulation war which Hearst carried on with other newspapers.

The Counter-Attack on Hearst

Lightning, it is said, does not strike twice in the same place. But the lightning of mass condemnation of William Randolph Hearst and his methods is hitting his publications in full force for the third time in a generation.

Throughout the nation an enraged population is boycotting his press. His papers are excluded from homes and libraries. Thousands of workers, professionals, liberals and clear-thinking men and women generally, are wearing buttons with the slogan: *Don't read Hearst*. Daily, their ranks are swelled.

Hearst sowed this whirlwind of indignation by his current campaign against Communists, radicals and liberals, which includes manufactured evidence against colleges and

professors whenever disagreement with whatever Hearst might want is manifested. An anti-Red campaign has always been a convenient method of confusing and distracting readers who show signs of awakening to the fact that the promises of capitalist rulers are froth.

Fundamentally, of course, the revolt against Hearst methods is due to the hypocrisy and dissembling which have marked his whole career. A few weeks ago, after many academic groups voiced protests against the intimidation and terrorizing of colleges by Hearst, Professor Charles A. Beard made his now famous statement that "there is no cesspool of crime and vice which Hearst has

not raked and exploited for his own profit" and that no person of integrity would touch Hearst with a ten-foot pole. It was the key-note of a counter-attack on Hearst which enlisted notable groups in the educational, literary, liberal, radical worlds determined to end the Hearst attempts to corrupt the minds of the masses.

Since Hearst has never been known to adopt any position or policy which is not to his personal advantage or that of the ruling class with which he is aligned, it is significant that the campaign to banish academic freedom started just after he returned from Germany where he had a lengthy interview with Hitler, who, together with Mussolini, has received paeans of praise from the Hearst press. It is noteworthy also that Hearst's other foreign friends are leading fascists. In England, Lord Rothermere, the publisher who backed Mosley's fascist army, is his pal and business associate. With Rothermere, Hearst acquired an interest in the Canadian Power and Paper Company—from whom, by the way, he was receiving his paper stock at the height of his late "Buy American" campaign.

The drive was only part of Hearst's general drive for deportation of "alien agitators," against Communists, against the Soviet Union. All were marked by the usual vicious faking Hearst habitually employs. In the latest series in The New York Evening Journal by Thomas Walker on "famine" in the Soviet Union, the forgeries and fabrications were obvious.

It was at the instigation of Hearst, whose hope in the drive is to keep the masses divided from those through whom they might learn the truth about the decaying capitalist system and its real functions, that John Strachey was recently arrested as a "deportable alien."

In connection with the current campaign, Hearst is inspiring and financing the organization of the Fascist Youth Movement in colleges and universities, a branch of the American Liberty League.

Hearst journalism, although grown to a colossal scale, does not essentially differ from that which the young Hearst used when in 1887, at the age of twenty-three, he took over The San Francisco Examiner from his father. Any measures which seems to prom-

ise profit for himself or his enterprises or help keep his class in power are supported by him. The others he fights.

He knows that the New Deal has benefited the big corporations, and to that extent he is for it. But he lustily attacks the proposed prohibition of consolidated income-tax returns through which the heads of many companies could balance the loss of one against the profit of another in joint returns, thus escaping taxes. Then Roosevelt becomes "Communitic" in his papers.

It is different when Hearst, the self-proclaimed champion of labor, takes a stand on such a measure as the McCarran Amendment recently defeated by Congress. The measure provided for "prevailing" wages on work-relief projects instead of \$50 a month "security wages" on which Roosevelt insisted. Then Hearst-the-publisher vigorously supported the interests of Hearst-the-industrialist-and-employer by screaming editorially: "Support the President! Oppose the McCarran Amendment"—so as to "maintain the self-respect of unemployed workers while they are waiting for recovering business to re-absorb them" by the bare subsistence pay!

Southern Mill-Workers Framed

DAN SHAYS

BURLINGTON, North Carolina, a textile mill town with a population of 9,700, mainly industrial workers, is the latest scene of a frame-up by autocratic Southern bosses against union members and organizers. The Burlington mill workers took part in the general textile strike last year. National Guard troops broke the strike there even before the United Textile Workers' leaders sold out the strike nationally.

On September 15 a stick of dynamite exploded in the yard of the Holt Plaid Mill, one of the two largest mills in Burlington. Some window panes were shattered. The damage totalled \$12.50. Although the strike was over, the National Guard was still on duty, but found nothing to warrant arrests. Four detectives of the notorious Frick police in Pennsylvania were imported later by the employers. They picked up known strike leaders and militant workers for "questioning." Nine days after the detectives arrived, ten men were arrested. Seven were union men. Three were not. These turned State's evidence immediately, implicating themselves and the others. They were acquitted. The seven unionists were convicted and sentenced by Judge E. H. Cranmer in Superior Court at Graham, N. C., to terms of from two years to ten years hard labor. Sentence was suspended on one of these convictions.

Those sentenced were John Anderson,

Florence Blalock, Howard Overton, J. P. Hoggard, J. F. Harraway, Tom Canipe and Avery Kimray. The circumstantial evidence against them was so flimsy that even the prosecuting attorney, "was surprised" the jury found all of them guilty, and asserted he would seek a pardon for some of the men "provided the case was not continued by an appeal to the Supreme Court"—in other words, if the men sentenced in a frame-up would seek no redress from injustice.

The detectives produced a "confession" from Overton at the trial, implicating Blalock. Overton's wife, however, wrote that two plain-clothesmen called at his home, drove him to a bootleg liquor joint on a pretext, and tricked him, when he was drunk, into signing his name to what he was led to believe was a blank sheet of paper. The next time he saw his signature was when the "confession" was shown him. The testimony of Jerry Furlough, Charlie McCullum and H. W. Pruitt who appeared for the State, was contradicted by reputable witnesses and was also contradictory to evidence they themselves gave at the preliminary hearing.

Pruitt since that time has been tried twice—once for drunkenness, once for carrying a concealed weapon. A hundred witnesses testified to the good character of the accused men, especially of Anderson, who was president of the Piedmont Council of the U. T.

W. U. A war veteran swore that a few days before the explosion he and another man saw Pruitt in a stalled car with others, there was talk of dynamite; none of the defendants was with Pruitt at the time.

The judge's instruction to the jury was biased. The jury itself was not chosen in the regular way, but by Sheriff Stockard sending word to friends to be in court ready to do service when the case started. On the day the jury condemned the seven workers, the brother of the jury foreman was appointed by the Sheriff as superintendent of the county poor house. Speed-up and stretch-out are common in Burlington. The Holt workers live in leaky houses.

Through a system of dockings—charges for "ruined materials," deductions for a company insurance firm which seldom permits a hurt worker to collect—pay for the workers often is less than \$1 a week. Organizing against these conditions was the crime of Anderson and the other six. A Burlington workers' defense committee was formed to free them. Three professors from the University of North Carolina, the chaplain of an Episcopal school for girls in Raleigh, a Presbyterian minister, and a playwright joined. The International Labor Defense and the National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners were called in. The I. L. D. has already filed an appeal.



The Rape of Abyssinia

BRUCE MINTON

IN FEBRUARY, Italy announced to the world that a border incident on the East coast of Africa had cost the lives of five Italian-native soldiers. Italy had been insulted by the little Negro nation of Abyssinia, just as Japan had been insulted in Manchuria three years previously. Mussolini wrote a strong note to Emperor Haile Selassie, full of sonorous sentences on fascist dignity, demanding an immediate apology, and suitable ceremonies by the Abyssinian State in honor of the Italian flag. Besides, Italy required an indemnity of \$70,000 to assuage her slighted honor, and the setting up of a four-mile neutral zone along the boundaries between Abyssinia and the Italian possessions. The "insult" to Italy was understood throughout the world as a warning that Italy considered it a propitious time to expand Italian holdings in Africa.

After conciliatory gestures (though denying guilt for the incident) Abyssinia agreed to most of Italy's demands. But the obvious preparations to invade Ethiopia continued. Abyssinia appealed to the League of Nations, protesting the fascist plans to seize territory and endanger the independence of the Negro State. The League agreed in a non-committal way to hear the complaint—though the plea was

naturally rejected by Italy. Now, with the question of German rearmament paramount in Europe, Italy's aggression in Africa is unlikely to cause much stir. Mussolini can rest easy in the knowledge that no nation is in the position to interfere while Italian fascism slices off greater colonial concessions. The possibilities of expansion today are limited. Each nation, by sheer force of arms, cuts out new fields to feed its insatiable need. Japan has invaded Manchuria; France has strengthened her grasp on Morocco; England has raised tariff walls to the outside world. And Italy, homeland of fascism, striving to live up to Mussolini's ideas of grandeur and the necessity of bolstering a rapidly falling standard of living, has turned to the one section of Africa that remains unconquered: the Ethiopian Kingdom of Abyssinia, the only Negro State that still is independent. Abyssinia is a prize well worth having—a high, mountainous plateau land, rich in gold, silver, iron, oil, copper and platinum; with fertile undeveloped cotton and tobacco fields. A country nearly as large as Germany and France combined.

So far Abyssinia has been only superficially touched by European "civilization." Its 350,000 square miles is inhabited by from

five to ten million Negroes, a mixture of all African races. In the eighties of the last century, Abyssinia was cut off from access to the sea by the European powers: England held the East (Somaliland) and the West (Egyptian Sudan); France occupied the Northeast (French Somaliland); and Italy took possession of the remaining sea-coast, the North and Southwest (Eritrea and Italian Somaliland). Each nation had a direct interest in the fate of Abyssinia. Italy, with limited colonial possessions, attempted to extend its power to cover the hinterland, but a military expedition toward the end of the last century failed miserably and from that time to the present Italy has had to content itself with peaceful commercial inroads. England, also, is particularly concerned with Abyssinia, because the headwaters of the Nile rise in the interior, and control of Abyssinia means the control of the water supply in the rich Sudan cotton fields. France has a valuable railroad that connects the Gulf of Aden with the interior of Abyssinia. Recently the United States has put its finger in the pie by developing a power project at Lake Tsana. And to add to the complexity, Germany and Japan have invaded the Abyssinian market.



The Rape of Abyssinia



The Rape of Abyssinia

As capitalism feels the pinch of the general crisis, the great nations look to their colonies as fields of exploitation. Italy, weakest of the great powers, has been able to get only the hindmost: a cut in Africa and two slices of desert land on the coast of the Red Sea, Eritrea and Somaliland. And now the time has come when Mussolini feels the necessity of stealing more territory. Italy has long coveted Abyssinia, and the fascists have decided to imitate Japanese imperialism.

The press in the United States, however, has not made clear that Italy has been given a free hand by France and England. Just two weeks before the border incident occurred, France and Italy signed an agreement which received England's tacit consent. Laval, French Prime Minister, had visited Mussolini in Rome. The result of the parley was the accord signed on January 8, 1935. The treaty settled six primary questions:

1. France would give a free hand to Italy to establish its hegemony in Ethiopia.
2. France retained Jibuti, naval base, which is indispensable for her relations in Africa and the Far East.
3. A free Italo-French zone would be established at Jibuti or at a neighboring point on the coast of Somali or in British Somaliland, to serve as an outlet for the railroad.
4. France remains owner of the Jibuti-Addis-Ababa railroad, whose administration would be given over to Italy who would receive a share of the income.
5. England remains in control of Lake Tsana and the Sudan regions of Abyssinia.
6. The financing of schemes to improve the land should be English or American. In the event of French financing, it should be organized in the form of a limited joint-stock company.

To justify such arrangements in view of treaties signed in former years, Mussolini had the following statement appear in the *Azione Coloniale*, in October, 1934:

Only to Italy . . . to its colonies which border Ethiopia on more than half its coastline, can European economic collaboration be entrusted. The other powers are too occupied and in the future will be more concerned in developing their colonial empires to be able to devote themselves to the well-being of Ethiopia.

Le Matin, close to the Quai d'Orsay in Paris, commented on the treaty:

France, although she has particular interests in Ethiopia because of the Addis-Ababa railroad, appeared quite willing to recognize Italy's privileged position in Abyssinia.

The French-Italian "understanding" came at a time when France and Italy were supposedly at swords' points. How then did rival imperialist powers happen to reach an amicable agreement? How could France, defender of the status quo, staunch advocate of the League of Nations (of which Abyssinia is a full member), sanction the expansion of its bitter foe, fascist Italy? Particularly in view of the economic fact that in the first half of 1934, statistics show, according to the French publication *Europe*:

While in comparison to the corresponding period of 1933, the world tonnage using the Suez Canal showed an increase of 7 percent,

the relative increase of tonnage under the Italian flag rose 25 percent. Counting only 6 percent of the world tonnage, Italy contributed 22.5 percent in the increase of total freight. In exact figures, the increase was 221,000 tons. *L'Afrique Française*, in furnishing these figures, categorically affirms that the tonnage could not represent anything other than war materials.

In the light of this and other considerations, why did France give Italy *carte blanche* in Abyssinia?

Ever since the turn of the century, France has blocked Italy's pretensions in Africa and particularly with reference to Abyssinia. From the first, England, to spike France's ambitions, has supported Italy's claims. Thus England and Italy opposed France, which in turn was assisted by Czarist Russia. France engineered her policy with such skill that Italy was forced to sign a treaty recognizing the independence of Abyssinia and be content with commercial conquests.

In 1900 Germany entered the picture. The famous statement of Bülow frightened France. Bülow insisted, "If the English speak of a Greater Britain, the French of a New France, if Russia opens a New Asia, we have the right to a Greater Germany!" In 1905, Austro-German imperialism signed a treaty by which Abyssinia accorded privileges that the other imperialist powers desired, particularly concessions with regard to construction of railroads in Abyssinia. This concession trod on France's toes. And so France found herself between the Central Powers and Italy's ambitions in Abyssinia. With characteristic imperialist cynicism, France performed an about-face, made overtures to Italy and England and signed treaties which settled, supposedly once and for all, the boundaries of the French and Italian possessions along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Italy cemented her rights to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland.

With the defeat of the Central Powers at the close of the Great War, France had nothing to fear from Germany or Austria in Africa. Consequently, she had no motive for continuing to cooperate with the Anglo-Italian bloc. Against the wishes of both England and Italy, France engineered the entrance of Abyssinia into the League of Nations. For her part, Italy was thrown into closer collaboration with England which recognized Abyssinia as an exclusive Italian zone of influence, with the reservation that Italy respected English water rights. French protests caused England to back down slightly, but the understanding between England and Italy remained in force.

At this point, Japan and Germany began to make serious inroads into the trade of Abyssinia. Japan, underselling with goods made from cheap labor, gained first place in the Abyssinian market, captured 80 percent of the imports, and its commerce continued to grow. Moreover, the great Mitsui firm purchased one million hectares of cotton land in Abyssinia and threatened England's cotton market. England heartily resented the trade rivalry, and Italy did not take the

commercial success of a rival nation with any great rejoicing. To augment the confusion of interests, the United States entered Abyssinia, taking over the management of an important project to dam Lake Tsana—a menace to English water rights.

The new bandit in the field—Japan-Germany—threw France back into the arms of the Anglo-Italian bloc. Each nation played the rival nations one against the other. England looked with favor on an understanding with France and Italy to counterbalance the Japanese trade menace and American interference with her water rights. Japan, opposed by England and America in Asia, felt that it could swap concessions in Abyssinia for a free hand in the Orient. Italy, threatened by encroaching Japanese commerce, turned to France for cooperation in Africa.

It was at this moment that Laval visited Mussolini and the accord outlined above was agreed upon. France gave Italy *carte blanche* in Abyssinia—not out of any love for Italy, but because the international situation forced her to keep in Italy's good graces. In return for French approval of Italian imperialism in Africa, Italy would not look to Hitler Germany for aid in her scheme of expansion, and it was felt that a concession in Africa might bring equal concessions in the Balkans, where Italy and France had been continually at each other's throats since the World War.

In the Far East, Japan was consolidating her position openly in northern Manchuria. France and England, though they waste no love on the Workers' State, nevertheless are not anxious to let Japan become too strong in the Orient, where both nations have important possessions. It was therefore necessary to allow Italy a free hand, so that in settling one menace—in isolating Germany—France and England could attend to events in China.

Abyssinia, last free State of the Negro, is to be sacrificed on the altar of imperialism. Italy has permission to go ahead. The imperialist nations will subdivide what is not theirs. Japan, eyeing the rich lands of Siberia, winks slyly at the new indication of Western hypocrisy and utilizes the incident to justify her own war preparations. According to the *New York Times* correspondent, Japan says in substance, "Italy's action justifies what we did in Manchuria, doesn't it? . . . When a great European power, a member of the League of Nations, considers punitive military measures, doesn't that give backing to our Manchurian policy—not to mention Jehol and Chahar?"

As has been proved over and over, border incidents are easy enough to concoct when it is time for the powers to indulge in armed aggression. In the fight for new spheres of influence each nation is the enemy of every other nation. Alliances shift overnight. In Abyssinia, or in a similar "undeveloped" territory, the seeds of the next world war take root. Imperialism must wage war, even if that means self-destruction.

Acorns

MARIA TERESA LEON

(A story of the Spanish peasants who in October, 1934, together with the workers, rose in an upsurge that made revolutionary history in Spain—by a well-known Spanish writer, who is now visiting in the United States with her husband, the famous Spanish poet, Rafael Alberti.)

“WHEN spring comes,” she said. “In spring, then,” the man answered, and swung off down a short-cut to the town. The first houses soon hid him from view. The woman stayed. She was thinking:

“By spring, we’ll all be dead.”

She stooped over and went on with her work, digging out the acorns that the pigs’ hoofs had buried in the mud.

All villages are made up of houses, even when those houses are nothing but crude, broken piles of masonry of unequal height; even when the bricks of which they are built turn brown and crumble into dust. The men continued to live in this village because their fathers have been laborers and their great-grandfathers men at arms, belonging to the castle.

The castle was gutted—no one remembers exactly when—and gradually fell, stone by stone, into its own courtyard. The towers fell over into the moat, where they still lie crumbling today, covered with wild figtrees—with crows for sentries.

Of course one might have thought that since the castle was dead, its vassals might have risen over its corpse, and seen the signal of their freedom in its decay. But the castle, like the illustrious dead, continues to command, even after death. There were heirs, whom no one knew, who did not live near the pitiful crumbling walls, but who, at specified times put out their hands and continued to bleed the countryside, just as in the days when the castle stood upright.

The men had stayed around the castle. They carried out their tasks of life sadly, softly, like water trickling through the moss. There were also women and children. The women gave birth, and the babies grew from children into men. They say a group of villages like that make up a country. From their pain, their ignorance, their labor and their gentleness, live the army, the navy, the diplomatic corps, the ministers.

In the spring! Spring would come and the promises of love would be accomplished, while finger-nails were broken scratching in the earth for acorns. They were hungry. This winter, they had nothing to eat but acorns, to the astonishment of the pigs, who rooted and grunted, unable to understand why men should dispute their pasturage.

The woman picked up her basket and walked away.

“You’re taking too many!” a pigherd shouted at her.

“I have four sons at home.”

“And what does that matter? Your mother bore a chatterbox! Bring them over here.”

He poured half the contents of her basket out on the hard earth.

“You are taking advantage of the fact that we’re alone.”

“If I took advantage of that, it would be for something else!”

The woman walked away into the wind, the masculine threat sticking between her shoulder-blades so close she did not even dare to turn her head.

She reached the first house. A man crouched on the ground there, spreading bricks. She did not greet him. He was deaf.

Women were washing clothes in a rivulet that came down from the mountain, and further down children dipped bread in the soapy water. The woman looked for her own sons, but did not see them. Where could they be at this hour? What could they be doing, if they weren’t opening hungry beaks like birdlings in a nest? But her sons were not to be seen in any street, and streets end quickly in these villages.

She arrived in the square. At the fountain, mules parched by the sun and the road, were drinking to refresh themselves. A group of men were arguing, the children watching them. Among the men was the one who had asked her:

“Will you marry?”

“I don’t know.”

“That’s not an answer.”

“When spring comes, then.”

He had approached the woman because she was a widow, and because widows are kind to timid men. Neither one would bring the other any worldly goods. They would meet on the path through the oak forest, the hands of both busy, gathering the acorns which used to be given to the pigs, but which the hard times had made into the food of the poor. But she was a brave woman. She turned thin and yellow under the very eyes of her neighbors, but her zeal on behalf of her children never slackened; and her sons, all their energy taken by the effort of growth, continued to suck her blood, laughing in the sun and playing in the square.

“What is it?”

“The tax-collector.”

“Ah! Blessed Virgin! I am the poorest in the village. I have only one mule, Mr. Tax-collector!” she cried, raising herself on her

toes so as to get through the group of men.

No one answered her. The men closest to her were speaking incomprehensible words.

“If they would adjourn. . . .”

A big voice shouted:

“Come and get them!”

“What? What is it?”

The woman gripped the gray jumpers of the men.

“What’s going on? Do they want to make the soldiers come?”

The tax-collector pulled his head fearfully back between his shoulders, smiling, flattering, trying to escape from the narrowing circle of indignation.

“What’s going on?” the woman kept asking.

“It is the right of the nation.”

Not a single person in the entire square knew what THE NATION was.

Pay! She slept in peace. She had nothing with which to pay. Nobody even gave her credit any more. How could they seize the air she breathed? Every one of us has a birthright in the air above us. Even if it is only a slice of air, an island of air that floats about, accompanying every man and every woman wherever he or she may go. There is no one who can make laws on the air of heaven. Her sons slept, each one with his portion of air over his head, and she too would sleep. She possessed only one mule, and some air. When the transport season was on, she rented out her mule. The mule also had a hat of air. Her sons and mule were equally free to breathe without payment to anyone. She said to herself:

“It is good to have children, to sleep close. They keep you warm. . . .”

The windows were broken, and they knew immediately that the sun had risen over the village. What they did not know before they reached the square, was that six pairs of Civil Guards—in Spain chickens and Civil Guards are counted in pairs—had occupied the town hall. But what could they be wanting?

The leader made short work of announcing it to the men who sat, with their hands, as big as fig-leaves, resting on their knees.

“Perhaps you think you can stay thirty years without paying taxes. I’ll take away all the livestock in the village to guarantee payment.”

The men tightened their muscles. The earth seemed to be cracking.

“You won’t do it. It would be death to all of us.”

“Yes. We will do it. It is the law.”

The uprising of the peasants on the square ended in a fusilade. The country guards, under the protection of the Civil Guards,

went straight to the stables to fulfil the law.

The cows lowed as they came out, unwillingly, like women disturbed with their hair half-done. The horses, startled by the light, wanted to run. The oxen and the calves were restless as they were forced to abandon the warmth of the manure and the family. Strange bellows, shouts, cries, grinding of teeth, guided them to the square. Strange men with the faces of peasants, but wearing black three-cornered hats, held the livestock in a crowded circle that kept growing until all the animals were brought together, from pigs to horses. The prison was filling up with peasants. The women defended the new-born of their animals with tooth and nail.

"No, not that one. He was just born."

But they took everything before them. Doors banged, hinges screeched, iron clanged. The dogs ran between everybody's legs, not quite certain whether they should join the weeping children.

"Attach the roosters!"

The children were fleeing toward the mountain, holding the chickens tight against their breasts, full of an immense terror and of boundless love for these fluttering hens with round eyes, so warm between their hands.

The pigeons were flying into the oak forest. The men ran into the woods, not knowing quite certainly why they carried their hunting guns with them. It was as though a gale of wind closed and opened fists, windows, mouths, and walls as it rose and fell, uncovering to the sun all the sad misery of the sordid stables and barns, stinking of urine

and dung, and never before opened so wide as today.

The woman did not grasp the order.

"Open up!"

"Me too?"

"Yes."

With trembling hands she opened up the corner of the vestibule where the mule had its manger. A man untied the halter.

"What? Me too?"

They did not answer her.

"But, I'm poor. I can't even buy bread. We've been eating nothing but acorns for two months. May I die if it isn't true. I am a widow. I have four sons. We eat pond-grass for dinner."

It was all true, and the woman was not struck dead. She went up the street, with her four sons behind her. They were shouting, losing their breath, screaming out their souls, pursuing their mule.

"Oh, my little mule! The finest mule in the world! Oh, what will become of us!"

A unanimous wail, that seemed as though it would never end, rose from the whole village. Only the church remained silent and sterile in this protest, because "its kingdom is not of this world."

Prodded by the bayonets of the Civil Guards and the bailiffs, the herd moved forward.

"We must follow them."

All the women began to march. A shot. A wounded cow broke away, brushing every live obstacle aside with its horns.

"Yes! Kill them before they take them away!"

"Get back! Fire!"

The avalanche of women and children fell back. The animals, in compact ranks, trotted ahead, surrounded by military rifles. They bellowed and grunted.

A few men continued to fire. They shot with the load they used for wolves. A tall cow fell, sprawling with legs far apart, showing her soft white belly. Then a horse.

The woman picked up handful after handful of gravel, throwing it without aim, and the others did the same, in a frenzy, frothing at the mouth.

The man, who was there also, caught up with the woman, and asked her the same question again:

"Will you marry?"

"Kill the mule. Kill her and I'll marry you tomorrow," the woman cried to the man who had to wait until the Spring. He fired, and the mule, wounded, fell moaning into the cloud of dust that lay on the road.

"Like this! Like this!" the woman screamed.

She picked up a stone that her wasted arms could scarcely lift, and battered the head of the mule, her flying hair, full of mud and blood and spit, covering her face and streaming into her mouth, while the bullets of the Civil Guards spattered around her. Her four sons surrounded her, battering the mule's head, killing, feverishly.

The herd reached the highway. Behind it was the castle and the village. A group of these little villages, they say, make up a country. From their pain and ignorance, their labor and gentleness, live the army, the navy, the diplomatic corps and the ministers.

Letters from a Farm Organizer

DAVID LURIE

1

How do they learn to talk, out on the fields,
How does the farmer following a plow,
The lines about his middle, learn to talk!
His horse before, he hitched behind the plow
Following with his mind the upturning furrow;
All four, man, horse and plow and furrow
Describe a single line beneath the dusty sun.
If at the meeting they will scarcely answer
Except to prove they hear and understand,
They will tell anecdote on anecdote,
Tales of the done and plans for doing
(How far the haying's gone and when the threshing).
Yet one will slowly speak, loose every word:
"If we can do the things you say, it will be good;
It will become the best day of my life
When they are done."

2

We take the final road, cautious of ice.
Frozen to shape, the ruts are deep and sure.
Here in the hills, here is an outpost.
Past the next corner, past the second school
The Party unit meets each Wednesday night.

The week goes slow until next Wednesday comes.
Then we can sit once more, we few
Discussing how our week must go.
Each has a weathered courage, each
Has learned to fight a daily round:
Soil, landlords, dealers, storms and heat.
Each one adds to the towering thought:
The world's within our reach.

3

Our work progresses as the days go by,
Together or apart, the work goes on.
Each night will mark a little more that's done
To match our striving. Neither you nor I
Can mark the change. One day a new recruit,
Once a defeat and twice a victory;
A never added total constantly
Showing success. We see the work bear fruit.
Thoughts turn till for one moment we have had
Remembrance of each other. Not enough
But respite ere we join once more the fight.
These letters are for you but you've not had
Dependence on them. Love is surer stuff.
Your office locks and to the hills comes night.

Uncle Sam—Farm Mortgagor

ROBERT F. HALL

WITH the federal government on the road to becoming the largest mortgage-holder in the country, the question of what sort of creditor Uncle Sam will be is rather important, not only to the farmers, but to the small home owners as well. W. Forbes Morgan, deputy governor of the Farm Credit Administration, stated last month that some 600,000 farm loans had been taken over through refinancing, since May, 1933. The Home Owners Loan Corporation, about the same time, announced that this agency had refinanced close to 800,000 distressed properties in the past sixteen months.

The value of refinanced farm mortgages alone is a billion and a third dollars. In addition, there are some \$435,000,000 in short-term production loans advanced during the past year.

This is especially important today because the chief instrument in the hands of the officials of the old-line farm organizations and the farm bloc politicians in steering the farmers away from struggle is the Frazier-Lemke refinancing bill. This measure promises, if enacted, to refinance ALL farm mortgages through the simple process of having the government take them over from the bankers, insurance companies, and individual creditors. It has few of the restrictions of the present refinancing act now in effect, and offers a lower rate of interest.

During the past few weeks, however, the eighth judicial district and, specifically, the court of United States Judge Andrew Miller at Minot, N. D., has given us an indication of what we may expect. Six farmers and a worker have been arrested on charges of "conspiracy to defraud the United States government," and four farmers have been called on the carpet for "contempt" because they protested, in the name of their organizations, the arrest of these men.

The case under discussion was not an out-and-out federal foreclosure case. It was simply a penny sale undertaken by United Farmers League and Holiday farmers back in September, 1933, to prevent an outrageous robbery of a young farmer by a mortgage company. The federal government entered by the back door, taking advantage of the fact that there had been a small feed loan on the property which the neighbor-farmers returned unceremoniously to the rightful owner.

To the farmers of North Dakota and to the masses of farmers who are beginning to learn of this case, the significant fact is that dear old Uncle Sam, whom the proponents of the Frazier-Lemke bill defend as a most patient and understanding creditor, has openly allied himself with the cheapest trickery, the

basest fraud which it is possible to imagine.

Just how cheap the trickery and how base the fraud will be understood if we go a little into details about this amazing case.

Back in 1930, Victor Nielsen made a proposition to his seventy-year old father and mother. Victor had just married. He had plenty of energy and he knew how to farm those Dakota prairies.

"You move into town," he said, "and take things easy. I'll run the farm, take care of the mortgage, and provide enough so that you won't go hungry. Now you own these cattle, horses and machinery clear. I'll take them over and give you a mortgage on them."

The old folks agreed, and Nielsen proceeded to defy prairie winds, a four-year drought and an agrarian crisis.

Next year Victor went to the old folks again. "It hasn't been so easy," said he. "To make some repairs on the place and have some money for tractor fuel, feed and seed, I'll need about \$400. What do you say to this? I'll borrow on the cattle but keep the horses and machinery clear?"

The old folks agreed. They wanted their son to get a good start. And Victor thereupon walked into the office of the Minot Credit company at Minot, North Dakota. It is an old metaphor but an apter one has never been invented: Victor walked into a spider's web.

The credit company took a loan of \$400 on the cattle and paid Victor \$300. The remaining hundred went for the purchase of stock in the company, a requirement every borrower must meet. The company agreed, however, that young Nielsen would receive credit for this amount when the loan was repaid.

Livestock prices did not rise that fall. Nielsen could not sell his cattle then except at a great sacrifice. Instead, he took a government feed loan in order to carry his stock through the winter.

In 1932, the agent of the Minot Credit company showed up at the farm. He asked for an inventory of the farm which meant listing the whole works, stock, machinery and equipment.

"Hold on now," said Nielsen. "I'm not putting these things on the mortgage. They belong to the old folks."

"This is no mortgage," replied the agent. "This is merely a financial statement. These records are necessary so that my company will know how responsible a farmer you are."

Reassured, young Nielsen signed the "financial statement." The threads of the spider's web tightened around the young farmer.

In the summer of 1933, Victor Nielsen's wife died, leaving him a small child and no taste for going on with this uneven fight. This was the fourth year of the drought, the fourth

summer of the capitalist crisis, and the second year of the reign of Franklin I. Sick at heart, young Nielsen went to Minot.

"I'm through, washed up," said Nielsen to the credit company. "I want to settle with you. Either I sell the cattle and pay you, or we hold an auction." The agent agreed, providing, he said, the whole amount was settled.

"What whole amount?" asked Nielsen. "I owe you \$300. I'll pay that and you keep the shares I paid for." The answer of the credit company was a flat no.

Nielsen talked to a member of the Divide County Holiday Association. Nielsen also visited Sheriff Lynch and told him the story. "Your offer sounds fair to me," said the sheriff, "but you boys wait until I talk to the company."

Don't ask me how I got this information, but every farmer in Divide County knows what the company told the sheriff. "We cannot accept Nielsen's offer," Anderson, a company representative said. "Sooner or later we will have to make an example of some one and we might as well start with Nielsen."

"I guess it will have to be a foreclosure sale," the sheriff told Nielsen. There was this matter of the government feed loan, which meant a lien against the cattle. The government agent, however, raised no objections to the sale. "It doesn't make any difference to us, in my opinion," he said. "There will not be anything left for the government after the credit company gets its share, but I believe it's okay."

The credit company asked Nielsen to sign a paper turning over to them the entire proceeds of the sale.

There are no phonographic records of this conversation, but I can imagine Victor Nielsen spitting his Copenhagen and telling the agent where he could go.

"Well," replied the agent, "we can get it anyhow, because we have a mortgage on the machinery and horses as well as the cattle."

"How do you figure that?" asked Nielsen. "Who gave you such a mortgage?"

"You did," said the agent, and exhibited the "financial statement" which Nielsen had signed in 1932. Sure enough, it was a bona fide plaster.

"I'm not signing any more papers," said Nielsen.

When the day of the sale dawned, no agreement had been reached and this was causing a lot of discussion among the farmers in the neighborhood. Farmers have a lot of confidence in arbitration, sometimes too much. But the fact remains that they seldom take action until every effort toward a "peaceful" settlement has been exhausted.

No one figured that the Minot Credit company would be so big a fool as to refuse to

come to terms with Nielsen. After all this was North Dakota and the North Dakota farmers' attitude toward foreclosures was well known.

Nevertheless there were farmers here from the farthest corners of Divide County and from Sheridan County, Montana, just across the line. But it was not until the crowd had collected around the house that definite protective steps were taken. Groups of farmers, one or two at a time, detached themselves from the crowd and quietly dropped over to a neighbor's house for a little visit. For the purpose in hand, this was the committee for action, made up of representatives of the Holiday Association and the United Farmers' League. After a while Victor Nielsen got word to come over to the neighbor's.

When Victor returned, he said he was ready to sign the agreement. Anderson, the credit company agent, produced the papers, and Nielsen signed. Ed. Ferguson, the auctioneer, raised his hammer and the sale began.

The bids were low. In fact the largest was about 10 cents. Auctioneer Ferguson, who was also a Holiday member, stated very solemnly that he was "dumbfounded" that the farmers set such a low value to the articles. "But after all, friends," he said, "this is an auction, and these are the bids." The total amount raised on the sale of cattle, machinery and horses, was \$2.44. Mr. Anderson in great rage refused to accept it. The chattels remained in the hands of the Nielsen family.

Action was immediately started against Nielsen in the local courts, but it soon petered out and quiet settled on the land.

When the writer was working in Montana in the winter of 1933, Hans Hardersen, state secretary of the U.F.L. called a little meeting. He reported that a federal agent had come to town and questioned several farmers at length about the Nielsen sale. We were at that time puzzled as to the interest of the federal government in our North Dakota-Montana case.

On January 26, we got our answer. Victor Nielsen, Alfred Hjelm, Ed. Ferguson, Elmer Dodin and Carl Christofferson, all of Westby, North Dakota, and Simon Swanson of Plentywood, Mont., were arrested by the U. S. Marshal on a charge of "conspiracy to defraud the United States government." Thorvald Nielsen, a brother of Victor, was arrested several days earlier, it developed, and was kept five days in a vermin-infested cell in Minot. It was announced that they would be brought before United States District Judge Andrew Miller at Minot.

Immediately a storm of protest broke around the head of the startled Judge Miller. The United Farmers' League and the Holiday Association went into action over night in North Dakota and Montana. The national organization of the U.F.L. and the Farmers' Weekly carried the fight into the various states of the Northwest, the East, West and South.

A week before this writing, the seven defendants appeared before Judge Miller who dismissed the indictment as faulty. But he

held the seven on bonds until the next session of the grand jury can redraw the document.

The next day, when Judge Miller mounted to the bench, many of the audience thought he was close to an apoplectic stroke. In the course of his speech he thumped the desk loudly several times.

He called on the U. S. attorney to arrest four farmers, one from North Dakota and three from Montana, to bring them before the court "to show cause why they not be held in contempt of this court for trying to intimidate" him and "corrupt this court." These farmers were officers of locals of the Holiday and the U.F.L. who had affixed their names to letters protesting the arrest of the seven and demanding their release.

"Now it appears," said the judge in the somewhat unclear language of the bench, "that since the arrest of these defendants (in the penny sale case) there has been begun and to a considerable extent effected an organization of various organizations for the purpose of intimidating this court.

"There are a great many persons in this state who are honest . . . but who unfortunately lend themselves readily to machinations of demagogues and persons who are unworthy of credit and who deceive these honest persons into believing there is something wrong with some one beside themselves."

After a somewhat extended diatribe against the "demagogues" the judge read several of the protest letters.

If the judge believed that hauling these four farmers into court will stop the flow of protests, he is likely to be disappointed. Hans Hardersen, Montana secretary of the U.F.L., has issued a call for renewed protests. Another Montanan writes, "Let's see how far the judge will go with this. I know lots of farmers in Pennsylvania who would like a trip to North Dakota at the government's expense." It has been reported that several members of the North Dakota state legislature have added their protests to the judge's morning mail.

If anything, the judge has succeeded in arousing wider indignation by his attempt to gag the farmers and prevent their expressions of protest against the arrests. The telegram sent to Judge Miller by Kay Heikkila, young district organizer of the Communist Party at Bismarck, expresses the attitude of many Northwestern farmers whom I know and who are not Communists. The telegram characterizes the judge's action as a "direct violation of rights of petition and protest of the masses."

Clearly there is more behind this case than the spleen of Judge Miller. In the opinion of this writer, the present case indicates the beginning of a drive on the part of the federal government to safeguard its loans to American farmers and small home-owners.

North Dakota was picked for the beginning of operations, no doubt, because North Dakota is an outpost of farm militancy. The traditions of struggle are deep and wide and organization is strong among the pioneers and the first generation of pioneer offspring. Nothing less than a mighty blow can crush the re-

sistance of the North Dakota farmers, the government evidently feels, but they are confident that success in North Dakota would spell success in dozens of other states.

Coupled with this is the fact that the North Dakota farm masses have been hit harder than those of any except the southern states. Recently I secured a copy of a F.E.R.A. report which revealed that Burke County, a fairly typical grain and cattle county of North Dakota, had 54 percent of its population on relief. Of one hundred and fifty-seven households covered in the report, fifty-seven were owners and fifty-five were heavily mortgaged. 68 percent of the cases had mortgages on their chattels. Tax delinquency had risen from 2.4 percent of the levy in 1927 to 77.5 percent in 1933.

Herds of stock have been almost wiped out in North Dakota, thanks to the drought and the A.A.A. (the Northwest has had a five-year drought), and there are few farmers with adequate seed or feed. Even with prices rising, it is a cinch that the masses of farmers will not have the money to repay either seed and feed loans or mortgage loans because they will have nothing to sell. The federal government (which does not deceive itself with its "billion-dollar increase in farm income" stories) unquestionably realizes that debt collection is going to prove a hard row to hoe.

Added to this is the fact that there is a wider acceptance of a principle best expressed in the slogan, "The wife and children have the first mortgage." This means that farmers who do raise a little cash should make no payments until there are potatoes in the cellar, meat in the smokehouse and a few clothes for the family.

Naturally all of this makes for uneasiness in the House of Morgenthau. At the same time, the government has no intention of endangering its credit or harming its bondholders through laxity in pressing for payment. The Dakota case is the beginning of the pressure on the farmers. Among the small-home owners, less dramatic but perhaps more effective action has already begun. John H. Fahey, chairman of the H.O.L.C., announced February 4 that "no compromise can be made with borrowers who deliberately refuse to live up to their contracts. . . . A number of our borrowers now face the loss of their properties through foreclosure because they willfully defaulted on their payments."

The government would like to do the trick through propaganda, but failing in this, foreclosures are on the order of the day and jail sentences will be sought for those who resist.

Undoubtedly there are many of Washington and Wall Street who realize that there will be resistance. That is the reason why James H. Rand, chairman of the Committee for the Nation, called in leaders of certain farm organizations for those little conferences which were reported by Marguerite Young in *The Daily Worker* of February 5 and 6. That is why the pro-fascist organizations are making every effort to tie the farm organizations into their plans.

Correspondence

Bronx Physician Takes Exception

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In your issue of March 5, 1935, an article by Martha Andrews makes the following statement: In the Bronx half of the physicians are on relief. This statement is slightly exaggerated—only about 500 percent.

Another statement the writer makes is that the Bronx County Medical Society voted for socialized medicine—absolutely untrue.

However, if this was intentional, it was probably done in the name of propaganda; if not intentional, the writer ought to retract her misstatement.

DR. WILLIAM KLEIN.

Bronx, N. Y.

Martha Andrews Replies

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Dr. Klein in a letter challenges two statements made about Bronx physicians in my article "Doctors in the Red."

The statement that 50 percent of the Jewish physicians in the Bronx are on relief was made in an interview by Mr. Codvin, Secretary of the Bronx County Medical Society.

I am indebted to Dr. Klein for his correction in reference to my statement about the attitude of the Bronx County Medical Society on socialized medicine. While the Association published a report favoring socialized medicine, the report was not accepted by its membership.

Several protests have been made against the reference to the chiropractors in the above article. Much stronger statements than mine have been made in Bulletin No. 16 of the Committee on the Cost of Medical Care, "Healing Cults," which is generally regarded as an authoritative study as far as professional questions are concerned.

MARTHA ANDREWS.

New York City.

American Student in Moscow

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Just to give you an idea of how much elapsed since I started this letter: Just after the Second All-Union Congress of Collective Farmers, it's a pleasure to see all the enthusiasm and support of the Soviet policies this Congress brought forth. All these delegates, plain peasants, many of whom have never been in a large city before, meet, swap experiences, draw up plans, and then depart to all corners of the Soviet Union. Take for instance one delegate—70 years old. Had never been in a large city before. First thing he did was to go to the zoo because, as he stated, "I always thought those animals never existed but were drawn by men just to make money." After this old boy is convinced, he is sent back to pass on his knowledge, and it's a fact that he can do it better than any propagandist. Then they quoted Hitler at the Congress—that the Asiatic peoples were no better and just as intelligent as apes. Do you need anything better to spur on our Asiatic peoples? Just for "spite" they're going to fulfill their plan, build up modern cities, and study like all hell just to show dear old Adolph. It goes without saying that these Asiatics will sure put up a stiff fight against any intervention. . . . The big thing is the elimination of the ration system on bread, grain and flours. After this you can't recognize Moscow. No queues. A wider assortment of food products: corn-flakes, malted milk, hot dogs on roll (the sauerkraut is still used in soup only, here) and coffee glaze. And prices have taken such a slide that I'm really getting fat on a measly salary. Whereas I used to eat cabbage-soup and potatoes or potato-soup and cabbage with a herring thrown in on holidays, I now insist on Yankee bean soup, fried chicken, French-fried and some salad, all rounded

up with some stewed fruit. All at a price lower than that of cabbage soup, etc. People are now insisting on the best, whereas before, the thing was to get it. By eliminating the difference between commercial and ration prices, the ruble has been put on its feet. Before, rationed bread sold at one ruble a kilo and commercial, three-fifty. We are in a position to do all this because we have liquidated our class enemies and can be sure that these products will not fall into speculators' hands but go through the State channels only. Then again we have a sufficient supply of bread to feed all. You see, it's this way: Now that collective farming has proven its worth and now that the socialist form of economy is holding the reins, we can allow the peasant to sell his bread freely. Whereas before, the peasant system prevailed, now money is the common equivalent. Before, it was impossible to get milk for money, one pint equalled one pound of bread (which amounted to one-fifty), now, one pound costs forty kopeks. Figure it out for yourself by about how much prices have fallen. Prices fall before your eyes. Corn-flakes fell from six to four-eighty (per kilo). Halvah (formerly a luxury to be gotten in ration stores only) from eleven to five-sixty. Butter from forty to twenty-five, etc., etc. For the one who formerly lived on ration bread, the present prices represent a slight increase. Therefore all workers, students and anyone else you can think of, got a raise to cover up this increase in the cost of bread. And the increase is allotted according to the amount of bread one eats. What I mean is this: For instance a worker eats two pounds of bread a day and an office worker eats a pound and a half. That means that the worker will get a correspondingly larger raise than the office worker. And so it is. The worker gets almost twice as much as the office worker. This raise means more, coming in the face of falling prices. Funny, but now that one can get all the bread he wants, people are buying less bread than they did before, under the ration system.

Moscow, U.S.S.R.

B. COOPER.

The Negro Liberator

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The *Negro Liberator* is the only newspaper exclusively in the Negro field which fights for the unconditional equality of the Negro people. Its popularity has been steadily growing, as has been evidenced by increased circulation during the last six months of 1934.

The need for the leadership of the *Liberator* is sharply proven by the recent events in Harlem, wherein the Negro people resented in mass the conditions of misery, exorbitant rents, job discrimination, police brutality, inadequate relief, and the general oppression which they suffer in the Harlem territory.

Only the *Liberator*, out of all the newspapers solely in the Negro field, has led the fight for Scottsboro unity and for the combined struggle of Negro and white against the growing terror heaped upon the Negro people.

Today the *Negro Liberator* is in urgent need of funds. On account of a stifling deficit, it was compelled to abandon weekly publication and become a semi-monthly. It is now faced with suspension.

We are conducting a drive for a five-thousand-dollar sustaining fund, to be put over the top by July 15. The success of this campaign will determine the effectiveness—and even the life—of our paper.

We appeal directly to all friends and sympathizers of the struggles for Negro liberation to contribute immediately in large and small sums, to the *Liberator*.

NEGRO LIBERATOR CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE.

308 W. 141st St.,
New York City.

Praise for Herbst and Gropper

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I can remember very few articles that were as touching, and, at the same time stirring, as the splendid first installment of Josephine Herbst's series of articles on "The Soviet in Cuba." The second is eagerly awaited.

And Gropper too, is deserving of a paean of praise for his biting caricatures.

These, and other brilliant contributions, can have only one result—that of making tentative readers permanent subscribers.

MOLLY BORNSTEIN.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Culture and Politics Again

[In the NEW MASSES of March 26, Gladys Fisher, a reader, raised the point that "the great preponderance of political articles over cultural" in the NEW MASSES is regrettable.—THE EDITORS.]

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I have a fairly complete file of the weekly NEW MASSES, and, looking them over, I receive an impression exactly contrary to that of your correspondent Gladys Fisher. It seems to me that, first, there is a great predominance of literary and artistic matter over political and economic, and that, second, this is to be deplored. Art and literature are undoubtedly important, but I submit that they are not of dominant importance, and therefore not entitled to a dominant position.

THE NEW MASSES aims to reach the middle classes. True enough. But it wishes to reach them for a purpose. And it will never win them to Communism unless the Communist card is presented in a form fuller than a few tacked-on postscripts. . . . I remember your advertising THE NEW MASSES as a gift for those "who are still arguing why Hitler came to power." I think such matters are more important than even very complete articles on technical problems of the writer.

Last of all—THE NEW MASSES should reach its own readers. I hate to say it, but in New York, at least, many, if not most, are surprisingly ignorant of politics and economics. However, there seems to be an increasing tendency of late on the part of THE NEW MASSES to do something about it. Certainly you do not lack talent. A list of your past contributors includes such names as Addison T. Cutler, Harold Ward, Louis M. Hacker, John Strachey, Colston E. Warne, Earl Browder, Dorothy W. Douglas, Robert W. Dunn, Scott Nearing—names that would all bear repeating. I think you are moving in the right direction, and I say, more power to you!

ALBERT B. MORRIS.

Strachey Not "Disowned"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The current issue of the "Literary Digest" carries a statement to the effect that John Strachey has been disowned by the Communist Party in England. What are the facts?

A FRIEND OF THE NEW MASSES.

Rochester, New York.

[The Communist Party of England stated only that John Strachey was not a member of the Party. Mr. Strachey has declared publicly that he does not speak officially for the Communist Party. This does not mean, however, that Communists repudiate the general economic and political analysis of capitalism and fascism set forth in Mr. Strachey's speeches and writings.—EDITORS.]

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Only One Subject

ONE OF the main problems that will come up for discussion at the forthcoming American Writers' Congress will be that of revolutionary theme or content for the literature of today and of tomorrow. The books and stories of the past generation dealt, critically or complacently, with the growth of an expanding capitalism; today even the most reactionary writer finds that he must write of a world in a state of change. He may oppose that change, but he simply has to recognize it.

To have any worth whatever, writing must be done from a firm point of view; and only when that point of view is soundly worked out is the writing sound. Personal confusion carries through to the written page, and only confusion is the result. Bringing together the hundreds of left-wing, proletarian writers of America for discussion and cooperation will result in clarifying their view of the world in which they live, in clarifying and strengthening their work.

Hostile critics still say that the radicals dogmatically try to lay down rules as to the subject matter writers must use and the way they must use it; but it is life itself that lays down the rule. It inevitably works out this way: in this changing world there is only one subject to write about. No matter how you may try to avoid it, it forces itself in—the struggle between exploiter and exploited, between the worker and his master. You simply cannot face the world of today honestly, and leave it out. More than that—it insists by its own imminence upon being the center and theme of your work. There is only one way to avoid this: by deliberately ignoring reality altogether and fleeing into fantasy or mysticism. It is significant that some important bourgeois authors have been forced to do just this in the past few years, or to announce publicly that they would write no more.

By the extremist definition, proletarian literature—created by and for the workers, in and of a proletarian culture—is impossible in the America of today. But I think that is taking things too literally. True, we do not see the victorious workers in control, but we do see workers living as best they can under a capitalist culture. We see their lives as tremendously interesting, varied, purposeful: There is the struggle for bare existence, the bitter fight to live a personal life under wage slavery, the attempt to find satisfaction in work, in creation, in accomplishment, within the hampering bonds of a profit economy. There is conflict and contrast and drama enough here for a thousand books, poems, plays. It is ten times as rich material as the pallid love stories and money-

making chronicles of popular American literature.

Literature produced today must, if it's to be honest, reflect the new world in birth, even if indirectly through criticism of the old decaying world. We must all, I suppose, pass through the stage of mere criticism of the culture which we have inherited; but the writer who springs from the working class or has identified himself with and continues to live in that class, has to pass on to the constructive stage of writing about the world of the workers. It is not enough to criticize and denounce the old world; we must go on and do our part toward building the new culture.

Now, only someone who lives his life in the proletarian strata of our civilization can write about it authentically. This is not to say that proletarian writers must be born; there is the possibility of taking out naturalization papers. A writer, facing the disintegration of his bourgeois culture, dissatisfied with the rottenness of the social system, honestly looking for something better, can cast his lot in with the working class. In time he may become so acclimated and naturalized that he will produce real proletarian literature. He will not do it at once, any more than he could move to a foreign country, study the language, and immediately be able to think and write in that language. He must literally acquire a different way of thinking. The slant, the viewpoint, of one who has always worked for a living, who has been exploited, whose whole life has been conditioned by the job and the lay-off and the pay envelope—all soaked into his very bones—cannot be picked up by an outsider in a day or a year.

In this connection the problem raised by writers like Horace Gregory becomes quite a secondary thing. Speaking personally now, I am totally unable to understand this problem of where the writer shall stand, because for me no such problem exists. I am a worker, and so my identification with the radical movement, the Communist Party, is the inevitable end-result of my growing awareness of the world I live in. It is the result of my education as a worker; not something I accept, or join, or affiliate with. It is something that I am. I attempt to function in that movement as a writer because it seems to me that I can be most useful in that way.

I am beginning to understand my world, and I hope to be able to tell about it; but in writing about this changing world, this world of class struggle, we have a scant perspective and almost no tradition to help us. We are new to industrial life, in the histor-

ical view; we have been tied to the factory belt for so little time. Consider the ages in which other cultures have grown to maturity, developing their literature with them. The race has a heritage of classics of the soil, of pastoral stories and legends. With the birth of earliest culture, before language grew or records were written, men lived on and by the soil. It was a way of life, and out of the living of it, its literature grew. It will be a long time still, before a factory worker can write of his factory, as a true son of the soil wrote about nature; but it will come, in the new world that has dawned in one part of the earth and still struggles for birth elsewhere.

Such a book as *Growth of the Soil*, the stories of Ruth or of Jacob from the Old Testament, *The Peasants*; even such modern stories as *O Pioneers*, have a solidity in them that means the complete integration of life and culture. But that is precisely the reason why a story of strong, simple people of the soil, written today, sounds unutterably phoney and faked. The old culture is dead. The banker and the mortgagee, the money crop and the government "expert" have smashed it. The farm today is an auxiliary of the factory system, exploited and ruined by that system. Agrarian life today is itself a life of struggle, and can only be written of as such. We will write our epics of the assembly line only when we have a socialized world; when the industrial way of life has built up a culture of its own. Only a Soviet Russian could have written that grand comedy *Time, Forward*, with its complete and satisfying absorption in the construction job.

Here we must write of work done under the hampering restrictions of capitalism, of the worker's life hamstrung and broken up by the profit greed of his boss; of lives lived out somehow, satisfactions snatched and

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fought for in spite of the oppression that hangs over every one of us who lives by labor. This must be done and it will be done, by the worker himself.

There are tremendous obstacles in the way of the real proletarian writer, the worker with the ability and desire to express himself and his class. In a broad sense, of course, every writer is a worker (Henry Ford never invented a more exhausting machine to tend than the typewriter); but due to the existing monopoly on higher education, among other things, most writers of today come from the upper and middle classes, and they lack the intimate knowledge of the worker's life that is essential.

Even the real worker is corrupted, more or less, by bourgeois ideology. If he is to be literate at all, he must be the product of our capitalist school system, where he has been steeped in the money values of competition, democratic illusion, a snobbish contempt for the working class glossed over by platitudes about the nobility of labor. But if he has gone out from his school or schools—the fewer the better for him—and worked under this brutal industrial system for a sufficient number of years, he learns things. He learns them with the muscles of his back as much as with his mind. He gets reality pounded into him, and he sees the world with a clarity that no school can teach. He understands that world, as a bricklayer can understand a page of Marx, while John Dewey or Franklin Roosevelt simply can't. His idea of the world squares

with his experience in that world; it's a matter of eight-o'clock whistles, employment-agency lines, sore back and lacerated fingers—not words in a book. And he can throw off those bourgeois illusions easily enough, because they are only a kind of parasite on his mind. There is nothing fundamentally real about the bourgeois way of thought that was imposed upon him, and when he is ready to cast it off he can do it without inner conflict.

But there are other and real difficulties in the way of the making of a proletarian writer. He must be, first of all, someone with the gift of words, born with a dexterity along that line just as his brother is born with handy fingers for tool-making. He must have learned the tools of his trade. He must have some small acquaintance with the world's literature, if only to know what has already been said and what remains cryingly unsaid. He must live so intimately in the

world of wage workers that it is his world, the natural and inevitable world, the only world worth writing about. And then, somehow, in between working for a living, hunting new jobs when laid off, he must find time to write.

Because he knows it's his first and most real job, he will be active in his trade union, and that eats up time and energy. When his comrades find that he has the ability to put words together, they load him down with more work—leaflets, secretaryships, without end. It has to be done, and he does it. And in the little time that is left, stolen from personal life and the necessary jobs, he tries to write, to do his share of building up a new culture and the expression of a new civilization for himself and his fellow workers. If all this sounds impossible, it's heartening to know that now and then it happens.

DALE CURRAN.

Karl Billinger's "Fatherland"

FATHERLAND, by Karl Billinger. Foreword by Lincoln Steffens. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50.

KARL BILLINGER'S chronicle is our first authentic, eye-witness account of life within a Nazi concentration camp. Because of its restrained, narrative quality, it is one of the most effective indictments of fascism on record. The brutality of the Third Reich emerges slowly through the simple story of day-to-day activities of men caught in the Nazi dragnet.

The author opens the story with his own arrest in Berlin. He is not a Jew; he is a full-blooded German, an Aryan. But he is guilty of the worst of all "crimes" under fascism; he is a Communist. His personal experiences and those of his fellow-prisoners reveal part of the technique by which monopoly capital ushered in the "new" Germany. The organized, "scientific" sadism of the brown-shirts and black-shirts in charge of political prisoners has few parallels in modern history. In their attempt to destroy the working-class revolution, the Nazis raised the third degree to an "educational" system; they were going to "convert" their opponents or kill them.

As sheer narrative, *Fatherland* is one of the most moving stories published in the past few years. Its characters are as sharply drawn, as human, as memorable as those of *The Enormous Room* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*; at the same time they are more significant; they are not unconscious fragments of humanity thrown together by a cataclysm which they cannot understand, but purposeful people arrested for deliberate views or activities involving the central issues of contemporary life.

Without yielding an iota of his principles, the author describes his captors with the same poetic objectivity as his fellow-prisoners. The daily life of the concentration camp brings

him in contact first with people, only later with ideas. There is humor amidst the horror of the prison as there was in the trenches fifteen years earlier. We have just heard the screams of the victims whipped for "educational" purposes, or merely to settle a bet among the bored brown-shirts; and now we hear the laughter of prisoners taken to the toilet in squads with the most extraordinary German efficiency. Against the degenerate cruelty of the Nazis stands out the equanimity and courage of the workers. The daredevil, laughing young Communist, Hans; the underground organizer, Helling; the quiet and devoted unit secretary, Anna; the grotesque, pettily brutal jailer, Schinderknecht; the worker, Berger, the subtle Schieber, the liberal, Weigand, the storm troopers, the student, Michaelis; these are all individual characters whose words and actions are specific and personal.

Yet they are typical, too. Billinger nowhere states a thesis directly. He has told a true story with the art of fiction; each character acts and speaks for himself, but the very nature of the concentration camp makes it a miniature Germany. From the relations of the prisoners among themselves and with their guards, it becomes obvious that the Nazis have a definite policy in the class-war. There is gradation and purpose in their brutality; they persecute with a clear notion as to what social groups are most inimical to the rule of monopoly capital; they hound the Jewish bourgeois less than the German worker, the social-democratic functionary less than the Communist rank-and-filer. The author counts his fellow-prisoners in the camp and observes that social-democrats are arrested only as heads of factory councils or trade unions while Communists are arrested as Communists. Worst of all the Nazis hate the Communist intellectual; they consider him the most formidable corruptive element among the German people. It is he who

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gives the workers intellectual weapons for the class-struggle; and, worse still, he is beyond "redemption"; he cannot be intimidated by force nor be deluded with demagoguery.

In contrast there is the student Michaelis—the best portrait of the liberal intellectual that anyone has drawn in western literature. When he first comes to the concentration camp, into which he has been thrown for his pacifist views, he feels that fascism and Communism are akin. He resents dictatorship of any kind. Life at the camp opens his eyes. He notices that among the prisoners—liberals, pacifists, Jews, social-democrats, Communists—the workers are the most intelligent, the most practical, the most courageous. "There is no doubt," he concludes, "the working-class is more fervently interested in social progress than any other." Still, he resists the workers' materialistic approach to everything; he tries to explain everything on a very lofty level of pure truth, pure science, pure art. His illusions fail to stand up under the raw realities of the camp; they cannot even stand up under the theoretical arguments of the revolutionary workers. "I've got to admit," he finally says, "that never have I encountered so steadfast a world outlook nor so keen an interest in theory as among these workers." The concentration camp educates the liberal student, but quite otherwise than the Nazis intended. By the time he leaves the camp he has discovered why that which is for him the most burning question—the relation between society and the individual—does not exist at all for the worker who feels himself part of a vast multitude, and particularly for the worker who understands the role of his class.

The workers themselves, however, are divided on questions of policy and tactics. One of the most remarkable chapters in this book describes an argument between Communist and social-democratic prisoners in which the differences between the two political movements emerge dramatically. All the mutual recriminations are there; yet out of them there rises the feeling of workers in all political camps, the need for the united front against fascism.

The social-democratic leaders are played out, a Communist worker says—if only because "they're incapable of building up an underground party now and heading the revolution with it later, so they can throttle it again as they did in 1918. If social-democrats are doing illegal work against Hitler today, it's no longer for the sake of some wishy-washy Second Republic. No proletarian's going to risk his hide a second time for the red, black and mustard. We're organizing and leading the underground fight. We'll lead the revolution, too." To which a social-democratic worker responds gravely: "That suits me."

When Billinger is released from "protective arrest," he finds the whole of Germany one vast concentration camp. He finds, too, the equanimity and courage of his fellow-prisoners among the class-conscious workers

of Berlin. He finds the Communist Party leading the underground fight, and when he enters the illegal ranks to participate in that fight, he finds social-democratic workers by his side. In that directed and purposeful proletarian unity lies the hope of the German people.

The burning of the books officially inaugurated the spiritual barrenness of fascist Germany. Since then the Third Reich has spewed forth only hollow and raucous propaganda. Hitler's literary camp followers, having formally repudiated intellect, have been writing with their unadulterated "blood." Consequently they have not produced a single book, movie or play marked by that synthesis of truth and beauty which we call art. Fascism is based on force and fraud; these can inspire only the hypocritical chatter of the venal and the terrified.

We have been expecting a revival of German literature from the camp of those who are heroically preparing the struggle against

the Nazi scourge. That expectation is being justified. By far the best book that has come out of Germany since monopoly capital called Hitler to power has been written by a Communist now active in the underground Party. In other times, under other circumstances, Karl Billinger might have been exclusively an artist. He has an extraordinary sensibility for people, a vivid memory for visual detail, an austere control of language. In our epoch, under the circumstances created by the fight against fascism, his talent is raised to a high pitch by the story he has to tell, by the viewpoint from which he sees people and events, by his own participation in those events. Karl Billinger has written a book that is accurate reporting, tinged with poetry. No one can read it and forget the Nazi concentration camps; nor can finish it and fail to be moved by the author's courage and faith in the outcome of the struggle to which he is devoting his life.

JOSEPH FREEMAN.

The English Poets

COLLECTED POEMS, and A HOPE FOR POETRY, by C. Day Lewis.
VIENNA, by Stephen Spender. Random House. \$2.50 and \$1.25.

IT IS impossible to open a book by Auden or Spender or C. Day Lewis without recognizing that they are poets of great competence. They have assimilated the tradition of English poetry, not only the main stream but all its tributaries. Lewis, for example, throughout his volume of collected work, brings to mind again and again such widely diverse poets as Donne, Marvell and Gerard Manley Hopkins, Blake and T. S. Eliot, and Emily Dickinson. Sometimes, especially in the earlier work, these influences are pure; in the more mature and the more definitely contemporary work they are mixed. Observe the following, straight from the note-book of Andrew Marvell:

I will not hear for she's
My real Antipodes.

Or Emily Dickinson:
Can a mole take
A census of the stars.

But critics have dealt at length with the work of these poets, notably in the critical forum in *THE NEW MASSES* last August, to which Stanley Burnshaw, Edwin Berry Burgum, Horace Gregory and others contributed. The point the present reviewer would like to emphasize is that if this vigorous English school has based itself on English models, and even on Victorian and Georgian models, its distinction is to have carried poetry out of the parish, the manor and the village, taken it into the world and made English

verse once more the vehicle of world philosophy. That is what it became with Wordsworth, Shelley and others more than a century ago, and with Shakespeare and Milton before them. The doldrums which English poetry suffered from Tennyson to Bridges, have been ended. And much of the merit of this transition must be ascribed to an American poet, T. S. Eliot, whose work, if in no sense "revolutionary," even technically, at least was enriched by European currents, and brought over the complete influence of French symbolism. C. Day Lewis, in one of the best critical discussions of poetry since *Axel's Castle*, gives full credit to Eliot as forerunner. But if, as Mr. Lewis says, Eliot "grew tired of it all and took up the Anglo-Catholic position" (to which he has added the anti-semitic and fascist "position,") his successors in England have not followed his example. They have accepted all the implications of inevitable collapse and change in



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the social structure of the western nations; they have gone further and accepted the principle of the Communist way out of the chaos. Nevertheless, I believe it is a mistake to call these poets "proletarian" or "revolutionary." Their work remains still in the library; it is addressed in idiom and symbol to the upper middle class of England; it indicates no participation in the act of revolution. It reflects only obliquely the present struggles in England. The rather passive view of this group is expressed by Lewis, as follows: "The poet is a sensitive instrument, not a leader. Ideas are not material for the poetic mind until they have become commonplaces for the practical mind." Yet he also adds that "only revolutionary activity can make a revolutionary poet."

A really proletarian poetry is more likely to arise in the United States, where the "tradition" is not so all-absorbing, and more poets are given to bold departure. The great technicians have come from England in the past, where the career of leisurely scholarship has been inseparable from the career of poetry. This is an economic question. In America we have not had great technicians of the line. The poets have not gone to earlier models, but have forged their form and diction out of life itself. Some of these American innovations of twenty years ago have left their mark on the language of the new English school, a language wholly modernized and emancipated since the so-called Georgians.

It is here, then, that it seems to me a popular poetry of the working classes will develop more naturally than in England. We have already the beginnings of it in Whitman, and in the work of Joe Hill, Ralph Chaplin, Giovinetti, Jesse Stuart. It has far to advance before it will capture the mass mind and eventually be able to bear the burden revolutionary history must place upon it.

I have read Stephen Spender's *Vienna* several times, each time with a new appreciation of its supple lyricism and its power to carry hard emotion. Spender's poetry is almost like a natural flow of images, almost too throng-

ing and compressed for such a stark subject as the February insurrection. But he succeeds admirably in disciplining it, and has produced a swift narrative that more completely gives the human core of the struggle than volumes of prose. The weakness of this poem is in the last part, "Analysis and Final Statement." It is not "final"; Spen-

der has failed to convey the full meaning of the collisions involved. He ends on the same note of satire with which he begins, and the drama has not been lifted as it might have been. All that he does is to throw new light on the "ancestor worship" of his group by saying of the Vienna heroes, "These are our ancestors." ORRICK JOHNS.

Sympathy Is Not Enough

THE SECOND PRINCE, by Thomas Bell. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50.

ONE LIGHT BURNING, by R. C. Hutchinson. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50.

THE first of the affinities between these two novels lies in their common theme of a "soul in turmoil." But the unrest of Striker Godown (*The Second Prince*) is a response to the world he lives in; the unhappiness of Andrew Wild (*One Light Burning*) springs from the man himself.

Striker leaves a good home and a good job to seek adventure and beauty and truth. Years of wandering around the world and intimate contact with Mike Strovenik, a labor organizer, convince him that adventure and beauty and truth are not to be found in this world (read capitalist system). The problem is clear: shall he return to the easy life which is still his to command, or shall he throw himself into the working-class movement and whole-souledly work to change the world? It's obvious that what we have here is the struggle of the intellectual to define his precise relationship to the revolutionary movement. Striker's solution—as he so deprecatingly concedes—is the sort of familiar compromise which is ultimately an evasion. Beauty, he decides, can be found, literally, in the person of the lovely Lee: Lee and children and quiet living. As for the workers' movement his contribution shall be a novel of protest, perhaps an occasional check; always his sincere sympathy. . . . One may express the hope that *The Second Prince* is only a brief digression from the road which leads toward fuller allegiance and more active participation in the workers' movement.

Andrew Wild, professor at Oxford, is searching for a brilliant colleague, Franz Grundmann, who has gone to the outlying territories of Soviet Russia to bring Bibles to the heathen. In the course of his search, Andrew, who has heretofore rigorously denied himself love for fear of its interference with his career and the intellectual life, falls madly in love. The conflict now begins. On the one hand he goes on in his quest for Franz, on the other the ever-growing desire for Greta begins to sap his determination and steadfastness. Through no fault of his, one of his party is killed; through no fault of his, Franz is not found and is given up for dead. Wild feels that he has betrayed Franz, and the thought makes him neurotic to the point of desperation. But all's well. . . . In a dispute, Andrew Wild murders Greta's husband, and Franz finally turns up.

In the last analysis, it's apparent, Franz and Greta are symbols: the search for Franz is merely a continuation of Andrew's quest for what we loosely term the intellectual or spiritual life—an intangible, esoteric goal at best. Greta is the intense flowering of a normal desire long repressed. The possession of the two, proving incidentally that they are not mutually exclusive, brings happiness.

The second kinship between these two novels now appears. Both concern intellectuals, both close on notes of isolation. Striker's is the isolation which comes after a struggle with the world around him; is his adjustment, as we say, to life. Andrew's is more purely introspective; the beginning and end of the man's conflict was internal, localized, and narrow.

GILBERT DOUGLAS.

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PROBLEMS OF THE NEW CUBA, Report of the Commission on Cuban Affairs, Foreign Policy Association. \$3.

SINCE the overthrow of Machado in August, 1933, the revolutionary movement in Cuba has made tremendous strides forward. The development of a strong Communist Party in the island has given the movement direction and leadership. Today the Cuban masses know what they want and they are making it increasingly difficult for American imperialism to maintain its grip on the "Pearl of the Antilles." The peasants are fighting for land, monopolized by imperialist companies, and in some places taking common action with the agricultural workers to expropriate the land and divide it.

Workers, students and professionals have conducted strike after strike to better their conditions, the latest of these having been consciously directed against the terrorist Mendieta government, installed and supported by Wall Street. A powerful surge toward unity of all anti-imperialist forces is taking place for the fight against Yankee domination and the terror regime.

The imperialists are making desperate attempts to get the situation in hand. Through their official arm, the Roosevelt government, they have tried to stem the tide with a strenuous application of the Good Neighbor policy, sending now warships, now terrorist instructions to their puppet government, and carrying on continuous intervention of one kind or another. Now come the men of science to the rescue with fresh advice on how to make Cuba safe for Wall Street and a brand new coat of whitewash for the imperialists. I am referring to the Commission organized by the Foreign Policy Association at the invitation of President Mendieta and supplied with funds by the Rockefeller Foundation to make a study of Cuba.

The Commission feels that the imperialists could do much better for themselves if they would institute a series of petty reforms, for "unless a national program is adopted to meet the elementary needs of the population, labor unrest will again appear perhaps in a more extreme form, and eventually make the position of capital untenable."

To keep the workers from worrying during the dead season and obviate the necessity of paying higher wages, it is suggested that the sugar companies put the workers on parcels of land to grow their own food. Resistance to this program should be overcome by withholding dead season work. (The Commission hastens to say that this would not be forced labor.)

Unemployed urban workers should be taken out of the cities and towns, where they are fighting against hunger, and set to growing avocados, which the Commission has scientifically determined to be an excellent substitute for meat, under a wide program

of sustenance colonization. And the best way to stop the peasants from expropriating land, it seems, is to give them a little. Only such land as is not needed for sugar should be used for this purpose, however. Outright expropriation would be unscientific because the peasants have not lived on their plots long enough and besides "sugar *centrales* have paid hard cash for their land. . . ." Sugar restriction which has brought ruin to the colonos, starvation and a shortening of the work year to forty days for the sugar workers, and increased profits to the mill owners, should be continued. A series of other recommendations of like character are made. The final, and most shameless one is that a number of American experts be engaged to assist in carrying out the proposals of the Commission.

It is impossible in a brief review to do justice to the slanders, distortions and unblushing pro-imperialist attitude of the report, but here are a few examples: The militant Cuban working class is a "demoralized labor force"; the strike against the Cuban Telephone Co. (I. T. & T.) was conducted by a "small group of terrorists"; foreign banks offer advantages "which should

not be lightly surrendered"; and, while the Chase Bank did not evidence "sound business judgment" in granting the infamous Public Works Loan to Machado, it would destroy Cuba's credit simply to declare it illegal. The terror, of course, is ignored.

The Commission gingerly tries to evade the question of continuous American intervention in Cuba, but eventually feels constrained to say that the underhanded dealing of American ambassadors in Cuba "frequently leads to misunderstanding"; that relinquishment of the Guantanamo Naval Base should be "considered" since the U. S. has plenty of harbors in the Caribbean anyway; and that troops and marines should be used only for "evacuating foreigners." In other words, the time-honored excuse for intervention should not be cast aside. The report concludes with a panegyric to the Good Neighbor policy which has guided the Commission on its scientific way.

The report should do something else besides lending comfort to the imperialists: It should serve to stir every honest American worker, intellectual and farmer into action in support of the Cuban revolution—to hold back the fist of the imperialists so that the Cuban masses can more easily fulfill their slogan—"Bread, land and liberty!"

LUCILE PERRY.

Brief Review

LECTURES IN AMERICA, by Gertrude Stein. Random House. \$2.50.

"Of course if the English people had not been what they were they would not have made out of the daily island life the literature they did make. That is true enough. Anything is true enough. But that certainly is." This is the gist of Gertrude's lecture on English literature, if any recent writing of hers can be said to have a gist. The book also has lectures on "Pictures," "Plays," "The Gradual Making of the Making of Americans," "Portraits and Repetition," and "Poetry and Grammar." It has a portrait frontispiece showing Gertrude posed against an American flag, I suppose as a daughter of the American literary revolution, or is it the stepmother? The book can be recommended to psychiatrists as an example of the final, parietic stage of bourgeois culture.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JOHN M. SYNGE. Random House-Nonesuch Press. One volume editions. \$3.50.

It is a tribute to the publishers to say of this first volume in this valuable and beautiful series to be printed in America, that it is perhaps the best designed of all the eight volumes thus far issued. Synge retains his great stature among the writers of the Irish renaissance. He wrote in the interests of an Irish nationalism that was at a revolutionary pitch and in his love of the Irish language and folk literature, which it was the

task of his literary school to search out and resurrect, there was a genuine love of the people. His interest, however, was a narrow one. He saw the creativeness of the people and spent much of his life recording their stories and poems and reworking them in his own writings. But he was inattentive to other realities of their life, and his account of his journeys in the Aran Islands, for all its charm, has for readers today an antiquarian tone, because it is so excessively devoted to folklorish detail and ignores the grander features of a social *enclave* that is one of the western world's most interesting natural laboratories for the study of the human struggle for living. In the plays, Synge's

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mastery is supreme; but the collection of his poems, contains a few that rank among the sweetest lyrics in English literature.

NEW THEATRE. April issue. Published by the New Theatre League and New Dance League, 114 West 14 Street, New York City. 15c.

By this time New Theatre is generally recognized as the most important magazine in its field. During the past year it has made colossal advances, but at great cost to editorial and business staffs because of the small income at ten cents a copy. Faced with the alternatives of struggling along on its old basis or effectively expanding through an increase in price, it has decided to be "Five cents more—but what a difference!"

The April issue indicates what readers may expect at fifteen cents. There are four more pages, additional illustrations (by Grosz, Limbach, Mackey, etc.), and a radically changed typography. Some readers may be bothered by spottiness in type color and unskilful arrangement of illustrations, but the new make-up is in an experimental stage; there is every reason to expect in succeeding issues balance and consistent design.

The six leading articles in highly readable prose analyze the effect of war upon the

dramatic arts. In an unanswerable manner they show how the theatre, movies, popular songs and the dance were compelled to function as war-stimulants and war-nurturers twenty years ago. The articles by Hiram Motherwell and Helen Reynolds and H. W. L. Dana provide an almost world-view of the effect of the past war on American and European theatre.

Obviously the April New Theatre is required reading of all sincere opponents of war: it is the soundest kind of anti-war propaganda, for it is at once documented and unequivocal. Because it permitted a possibility of being misunderstood as anti-Negro caricature, the cover intended for the April issue was withdrawn. The added cost of a new cover must be met by widely increased sale, which the issue entirely merits.

With its broadened facilities New Theatre will doubtless provide the necessary thorough coverage of the bourgeois as well as the left wing drama. Its critical reviews which have been cast in the tempo of a weekly can now work toward the deep unhurried discernment which monthly publication permits. We may expect less frequent use of bourgeois quotations as touchstones of judgment. And we may count on a firm organization of its various departments. But these details are relatively easy to solve. Of far greater con-

sequence in the actual achievement of New Theatre, which has earned its right to a vast reading public and unqualified support.

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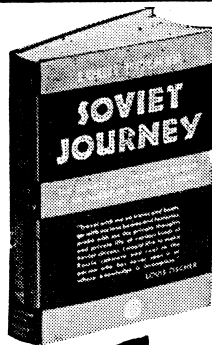
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The Theatre

Two Red Plays on Broadway

WAITING FOR LEFTY has come to Broadway. This time the Group Theatre produces it not for the benefit of some left-wing organization but as a regular Broadway offering: a double-bill of revolutionary drama by Clifford Odets: *Waiting for Lefty* and a new work of the same length, *Till the Day I Die*.

The first-night Broadway audience was frankly jittery from the moment it was plunged before Odets' picture of Nazi savagery. Constructed on a "Letter from Germany" published in *THE NEW MASSES*, *Till the Day I Die* studies the tragic experience of Ernst Taussig, member of the German Communist Party, who is picked up in the course of his illegal work and flung into the Columbia Brown House. His inquisitors put him through an unbearable series of tortures to make him reveal information about underground operations. Their physical inquisition failing, they set out to attack his mind. They force him to accompany their raiding-parties, display him as a stool-pigeon before his comrades who soon disgrace his name throughout the underground movement. Not until the final scene is he able to prove his innocence; and not until he has taken his life in the presence of brother and sweetheart is his tragic loyalty known and gathered up into the heart of revolutionary heroism.

From the very first minutes the action vibrates with excitement. With instinctive sureness Odets transforms static material into dramatic intensities; and some half-dozen fragments evolve with a kind of inevitableness. But the play as a whole moves unevenly. The moods of the scenes stretch to differing degrees of tautness so that they do not form a single line of tension which snaps in the final suicide. Although one of the characters (Major Duhring) is vividly realized, much of the dialogue is flawed by a kind of marginal undirectness. The characters stand in sketch rather than in definition. And thus the sharpness of the whole is blurred. In the moments of tragic heroism where the mood calls for exalted poetry the audience is let down by lean, over-simplified passages. Yet despite the fact that

the play as a whole is unrealized, a half dozen passages drive with terrific impact—and these alone make the play worth seeing.

Upon an audience of Broadway first-nighters the effect of such drama as *Till the Day I Die* and *Waiting for Lefty* is inevitably tangential. The central emotions are alien. They do not grant the axiom by which the dramatist's propositions are proved—in *Till the Day I Die*, for example, that revolutionary struggle against Nazi repression is the only road to liberation. Hence the Broadway talk about the poor Communist misguided into martyrdom because of his political loyalties, their notion that the whole conflict is marginal rather than integral to contemporary history, their fundamental inability to feel with the situations.

In *Waiting for Lefty* this inadequacy was sharply registered. To the surface denunciations of forces oppressing the taxi-drivers the audience was ready to respond, if a bit late; but the basic, the political passages brought dilemma. To the reviewer, who saw *Waiting for Lefty* three times before, the difference in alertness between Broadway and left-wing audiences was startling: in the

witty passages that drew instantaneous response from working-class groups Broadway's first-night brilliants came limping far behind. And yet they could not escape Odets' swift brilliant pictures of working-class life.

Obviously when such plays are produced before a Broadway audience there can be little of the direct response (which Herbert Kline refers to as "audience-identification") because actors and auditors operate on different planes of feeling. There can be, however, a special kind of "suspension of disbelief" if we rewrite Coleridge's phrase to mean a temporary dis-alignment from class-loyalties caused by sheer dramatic power. This, of course, was clear to the Group when it prepared its double bill of revolutionary plays for Broadway. It in no way narrows the importance of their undertaking—a brilliant opportunity for confronting such theatre-goers with vivid cross-sections of proletarian life and revolutionary struggle, for imprinting on their minds flesh-and-blood pictures of capitalist ruin. In every Broadway audience there are numberless potential friends of the revolutionary movement, a fact which we all too often ignore. While we sneer at these people, the Group does something far more intelligent. It talks directly into their ears, it challenges them with pictures of our world which some among them may come to recognize as eventually their own.

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Art

GEORGE GROSZ is generally recognized by the art worlds of Europe and America as the most powerful satirist of our time and one of the greatest in the history of satiric drawing. His name is identified with the post-war history of Germany, where his drawings cut so deeply into the flesh of the German bourgeoisie as to make him the object of innumerable attacks in the law courts. Charges of "treason," "sacrilege," "indecent" . . . every conceivable means was used to stop his terrible onslaughts against Prussian Junkerism, war-breeding capitalist society, and bourgeois institutions in general. In 1928 he was convicted and fined two thousand marks (later reversed), for "sacrilege and blasphemy" in his famous illustrations for Hasek's anti-war novel *Schweik, the Good Soldier*. His highly original and masterful drawings have generated the most important school of satirical draftsmen in Germany, and have been a powerful influence on many artists in other countries. In 1932 he came here to teach at the Art Students League and after a brief return to Germany in the fall, came back to make this his permanent residence.

His current exhibition¹ consisting of some forty water-colors executed in 1933 and 1934 is the first important showing of his work done in this country. For sheer mastery and control of his medium, Grosz has no superior, if indeed, any equal. Seldom is one privileged to see such unerring sureness of execution, instinctive organization, varied textures and marvelous handling of color. The suitability of means to end is perfect. In his use of this medium, Grosz has carried it to a higher stage than anyone else. To his superlative draftsmanship and composition he has added a personal use of color in a way to suggest rich psychological "overtones," appropriate in each case to the particular character of the subject matter.

Bourgeois critics have made pathetic efforts to explain Grosz's art in a way that would render it tolerable or at least harmless. They have tried to interpret his stabbing drawings as attacks against the rottenness of *humanity*. But even a cursory examination of his work will show that it is not against humanity that

his fight is directed but against a *definite section of humanity* . . . a well-defined class. Just as in Germany he fought the bourgeoisie, so here he continues this fight against the same class in this country. Look at the people he has spitted on his knife-blade in the present exhibition. Is there any doubt as to what class this is? In "Central Park West," "First-Night Audience," "Mother and Daughter," "Leaving the Theatre," and "Reading his Paper" he has told us what he thinks of wealthy parasites. On the other hand, Grosz's treatment of workers is always sympathetic. There is no mistaking the clear-cut class alignment in his art. Look at "The Sheriff" and you will see what he thinks of capitalist "law and order." See his "Veteran" and "Unemployed" and you have his commentaries on war. "Street Fight" and "Killed" are powerful dramatizations of the class war.

It is regrettable, however, that Grosz presents a cleavage between the class alignments in his art and in his everyday non-creative political activity. On the basis of his art there can be no doubt that his sympathies are clearly

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with the working class; his personal association with counter-revolutionary elements, however, can only be attributed to downright political confusion. His failure to recognize in the Communist Party the only historical force capable of liberating the working class shows him to be far less perceptive in the science of politics than in art, where his fundamental and true sympathies—the real Grosz—speak. Fortunately, his art is far more eloquent and infinitely more important than his non-creative associations. STEPHEN ALEXANDER.

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Raining No More

ROBERT FORSYTHE

AFTER missing *One More Spring*, the film made from Robert Nathan's non-sense fable on the joys of camping out during the depression—after missing it, I say, at the larger movie houses and trying in vain to locate it by chasing up the alleys and back streets of Manhattan, I gave up and went to see Tallulah Bankhead in *Rain*, which was having its last night on the stage of the Music Box Theatre.

The circumstances are mixed in my mind because the evening papers were filled with roars of war as the result of Hitler's plans for rearmament and my memories were back in those post-war days when prosperity was returning and the American stage seemed to be having a new burst of life. These were the years of the thrilling opening night of *What Price Glory*, the tremendous success of *The Show-Off* and the astounding acting of Jeanne Eagels in *Rain*. Rather definitely it was felt that the American theatre had grown up.

What Price Glory was brutally frank, with god-damns resounding through the auditorium and maiden ladies beside themselves with pleasure, meanwhile holding their programs to their faces as if in faint. When Louis Wolheim and William Boyd hurled their maledictions at each other, the audience shook its collective head as if to say "good gracious, what are these people going to do next" and smiled down its nose in the tolerant manner of a mother who has just heard her little boy say a word he hadn't oughta but anyhow he wouldn't know the meaning of.

Of the three plays, I always liked *The Show-Off* best because, for the first time, the American stage was hearing the authentic speech of the American people. Not the slang of Broadway or the southern accent or the Boston accent but the lilt of the American middle-class speech, the rise and fall and whine and moan of it. George Kelly not only wrote the play but he did a great deal more in directing it. The impetus he gave to the use of the American idiom was lost almost immediately, however, in a wave of corner-mouthed crook plays and English drawing-room comedies in which the cast was busily engaged in acting with their mouths full of tar.

Rain was a *tour de force* by Jeanne Eagels but it was also regarded as an epoch-making play. Made from the story by Somerset Maugham, it was the first bitter attack on the missionaries and it made use of the same Freudian images which were sweeping through literature at the time. When Dr. McPhail stood on the steps on his way upstairs and said: "So Reverend Davidson dreamed of the mountains of Nebraska last night? Did it ever occur to you, Mr. Horn, that the mountains of Nebraska look very much like a woman's breasts?"—when the doctor uttered

those lines a shudder used to run through the house, a shudder of shock and delight. The line was still having its effect last week, but not the effect of old.

In truth, the play was having a bad time of it when I saw it. Revivals are always a gamble but I don't believe even those with the most doubts about it ever realized how rapidly *Rain* had aged. Those who had seen Eagels were not pleased with Tallulah Bankhead but those who were seeing the play for the first time were excited by Bankhead but not by the play. In the big scenes when Bankhead screamed at Rev. Davidson and Rev. Davidson shouted back at her and it seemed that she would begin chewing up the scenery at any moment, there was the tingling feeling that always arises from sheer dramatic noise, but with it was a sense of embarrassment. Was this the great play of the 1920's? Was this what the shell-shocked war generation was concerned about?

It is simple to be superior from the vantage point of after-thought, but even so, *Rain* was a good play for its time. You can never get away from the feeling that it is essentially cheap but it is dramatically agitating and it gives the actors a chance to get into the thing up to their eyebrows and slosh around wildly in all directions. This was just as true in the original production. By some quirk, the audiences which were being trained by the understatement school of mimes suddenly reverted to the mood of *St. Elmo* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. When Eagels (and Bankhead now) made the lamps shake with their screams, denunciations and curses, the house responded in kind. The spectacle of the lady of slight virtue facing the sour-faced puritan was almost too much for the audiences which had sat for long years in Sunday School classes and church pews listening to just such pompous asses as the Rev. Davidson. The connection between Sadie Thompson castigating the pious Rev. and the pew-holders cheering her on was almost too intimate for comfort.

As a psychological study, the play was a

good trick. It seemed to have great underlying importance and it was really nothing but a Guignol thriller dressed in Viennese jargon. If such acting had taken place at the Civic Repertory Theatre, the critics would have referred to it as ranting, and yet I prefer it to the tepidity of a Leslie Howard. People after all do get exasperated and desperate and loud. When angry, they are likely to scream and kick. Perhaps the one claim to immortality of Noel Coward is his recognition that even the daintier of the species, the males and females of Mayfair, are capable of human action. No play of his is complete without one scene in which everybody concerned boots everybody else all over the stage.

But if *Rain* was a trick, it was a bit of legerdemain which took in the critics completely. For years Ward Morehouse of the New York Sun has let no week go by without mention of the play. His recent symposium of the ten best plays, gathered from hundreds of prominent people over the space of a year, showed *Rain* among the five best of all time. There was something pathetic about his realization that *Rain*, upon second sight, was no masterpiece, but his reaction was more ludicrous than the recent general bewilderment of the critics and professional stage people when they began to realize that the retreat of the commercial theatre they defended so bravely had turned into a rout. They had suddenly become aware that there was something essentially obscene in sitting five nights a week in a theatre before the fare which the Shuberts and Gilbert Millers and Theatre Guild were affording them. Brooks Atkinson of *The Times*, most sensitive and competent of them all, was the first to announce publicly that the hope of the American theatre lay with the left-wing groups. Who in his right mind could take the mock heroics of *The Old Maid* seriously when there was *Stevedore* to be seen? The Theatre Union, with only two years of experience, and the Group Theatre, with its radicalized members, are the outstanding theatres of America. There is nothing remotely approaching *The Artef Players*, those amazing working-class amateurs who stand comparison

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with the fine acting groups of the world. If there is to be violence on the stage, let it be meaningful. For me, *Waiting for Lefty* drives *Rain* entirely out of the theatre.

One must be cautious in stating the obvious for fear of annoying the bourgeoisie, and it is not polite to mention Marx before people who consider Walter Lippmann a thinker, but the success of the left-wing theatres is easily understood by anyone who recognizes the vitality of the Marxian doctrine. Quite simply, it is substitution of reason and common sense for the accumulated mass of dogma.

Along with the recognition of the professional critics that the Broadway theatre is played out goes a danger for the left-wing theatre. Unfortunately these critics have not kept pace with our playwrights and novelists and poets. The anxiety with which the left-wing companies await the verdicts of Mr. Atkinson or Percy Hammond is not a healthy sign for the revolutionary theatre. The fact that even in *The Daily Worker* and *THE NEW MASSES*, our theatres are proud to list the endorsements of the bourgeois critics is a bit touching and pathetic. When John Mason Brown deigns to pat us on the head, we are very proud. This is nonsense of the first quality. If the word of the Broadway reviewers will bring customers needed for the box office, well and good, but the feeling of contentment over a favorable notice by Gilbert Gabriel or John Anderson is so wrong as to be embarrassing. Not only does it allow these gentlemen an influence to which they are not entitled but it tends to weaken the very independent outlook which makes the revolutionary theatre important. I prefer to hear Joseph North on *The Black Pit* rather than Brooks Atkinson, with all his sympathy. In my opinion it is not only a remarkable play but for our purposes it is a great play. I was deeply moved by it and I think that the carriage trade, if they deign to venture so far south in the great city, will find it warming and powerful. But if the carriage trade dislikes it intensely and the newspaper critics find it boring, I will still not be worried. The revolutionary theatre is not the Broadway theatre and any attack from uptown which reminds the left-wing groups of that fact is a thing to be cherished. That much influence I will concede the gentlemen of the capitalistic press, but not one line more.

Between Ourselves

THE Post Office Department has agreed to the extension of *THE NEW MASSES*—The John Day Company Novel Contest until June 1, 1935.

Any novel dealing with any section of the American working-class may be submitted in this contest. For the purposes of the contest it is not sufficient that the novel be written from the point of view of the proletariat; it must actually be concerned with the proletariat. The term proletariat, however, is defined in its broadest sense, to include for example, the poorer farmers, the unemployed, and even the lower fringes of the petty bourgeoisie as well as industrial workers. The characters, moreover, need not all be drawn from the working class so long as the manuscript is primarily concerned with working-class life.

Sergei Tchomodanov's contribution to last week's issue ("The Origin of Music" was an abstract of a section of his great critical work *The History of Music in Connection with the Class Struggle*. Ashley Pettis is

completing the translation into English for forthcoming American publication.

New Masses Lectures

Saturday, April 6

Benjamin Goldstein: "Anti-Semitism in America." Windsor Hotel, Montreal, Canada. Auspices: The Saturday Night Club.

Wednesday, April 10

Sender Garlin: "The Inside Story of Huey P. Long." The Men's Club of the Eighth Avenue Temple, Eighth Avenue and Garfield Place, Brooklyn.

Friday, April 12

Joseph North, Orrick Johns, Isidor Schneider: A Symposium on "Proletarian Literature." Pre-discussion in preparation for the Writers' Congress. Premier Palace, 505 Sutter Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. Auspices: Brownsville Workers' School.

James Casey, Managing editor *Daily Worker*: "The Role of the Press." 1207 Kings Highway, Brooklyn, N. Y. Auspices: Ernst Thaelmann Branch

Sender Garlin: "The Inside Story of Huey P. Long" at 1373-43rd Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. Auspices: International Workers' Order Branch Y4.

Sunday, April 21

William E. Browder: "The Middle Class Must Choose—Fascism or Communism," at I. W. O. Center, 2075-85th Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

To Our Readers:

We are going to speak plainly here because we think of you not only as readers of our magazine but as editors too. We want you to help us in solving some of our problems.

As you very well know *THE NEW MASSES* is a non-profit making magazine. It is not in business to pay dividends and the only angel we can call upon to cover our deficits and to give us the moral and financial support we need is the reader himself. Moreover *THE NEW MASSES* is a cooperative enterprise: it belongs as much to you as it does to us.

THE NEW MASSES as a weekly was created to fight war and fascism. The problems it treats are political and economic problems particularly in relation to the middle class, and its program is to form a united front of the middle class and the workers to ward off the incipient danger of an American Hitler.

You, as readers have realized this, you have been brothers-in-arms with us in the common fight against Hearst, against Coughlin, against Long, against all the other forms of American fascism and against the war which now threatens the world.

Today the overlords of America are placing their bets on the demagoguery of Huey Long, Father Coughlin, General Johnson and Hearst. Meanwhile the headlines in the capitalist press announce war while its editorial pages propagate the idea of a fascist dictatorship.

You are not only a reader of *THE NEW MASSES*, you stand with us in the first line of defense. Our magazine today is faced with an accumulation of past debts, even though, as we announced in January, we are self-supporting. Editorial expenditures have risen, for we have sent the best writers we could obtain to get the real story on Huey Long, to investigate conditions in Cuba, to cover the strike areas, to find out what is happening in Washington and Russia.

Readers of *THE NEW MASSES*, friends, fighters against fascism and war, we ask your help. We do not ask a great deal. Just this: That every reader make it his duty to get another subscriber to our magazine within the next month.

We must continue our aggressive policy. We must attack. In the fight against war and fascism we are handicapped at the start if we merely take the defensive.

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